Bennett • Cafaro • Prianto • Peteri

WITCHBLADE

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DIGITAL EDITION
US
TOP COW UNIVERSE
NYPD
Silvestri
+arf

WITCHBLADE®

created by **Marc Silvestri**, **David Wohl**, **Brian Haberlin** & **Michael Turner**

New York City Police Detective Sara Pezzini's life was forever fractured by her father's murder. Cold, cunning, and hellbent on revenge, Sara now stalks a vicious criminal cabal beneath the city, where an ancient power collides and transforms her into something wild, magnificent, and beyond her darkest imaginings.

"I Put a Spell on You"

Written by **Marguerite Bennett**
Line art by **Giuseppe Cafaro**
Colors by **Arif Prianto**
Letters by **Troy Peteri**
Edits by **Marc Silvestri**, **Matt Hawkins**
and **Elena Salcedo**

Cover A: **Marc Silvestri** and **Arif Prianto**
Cover B: **Giuseppe Cafaro** and **Arif Prianto**
Cover C: **Blank Sketch Cover**
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Top Cow Convention Foil Exclusive: **Marc Silvestri** and **Arif Prianto**
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Special thanks to the dedicated crew at Image Comics without whom this would not have been possible. Thanks to the artists, editors, staff and fans who have contributed to the legacy of *Witchblade* over the years. May the adventures continue. **– The Top Cow Team**

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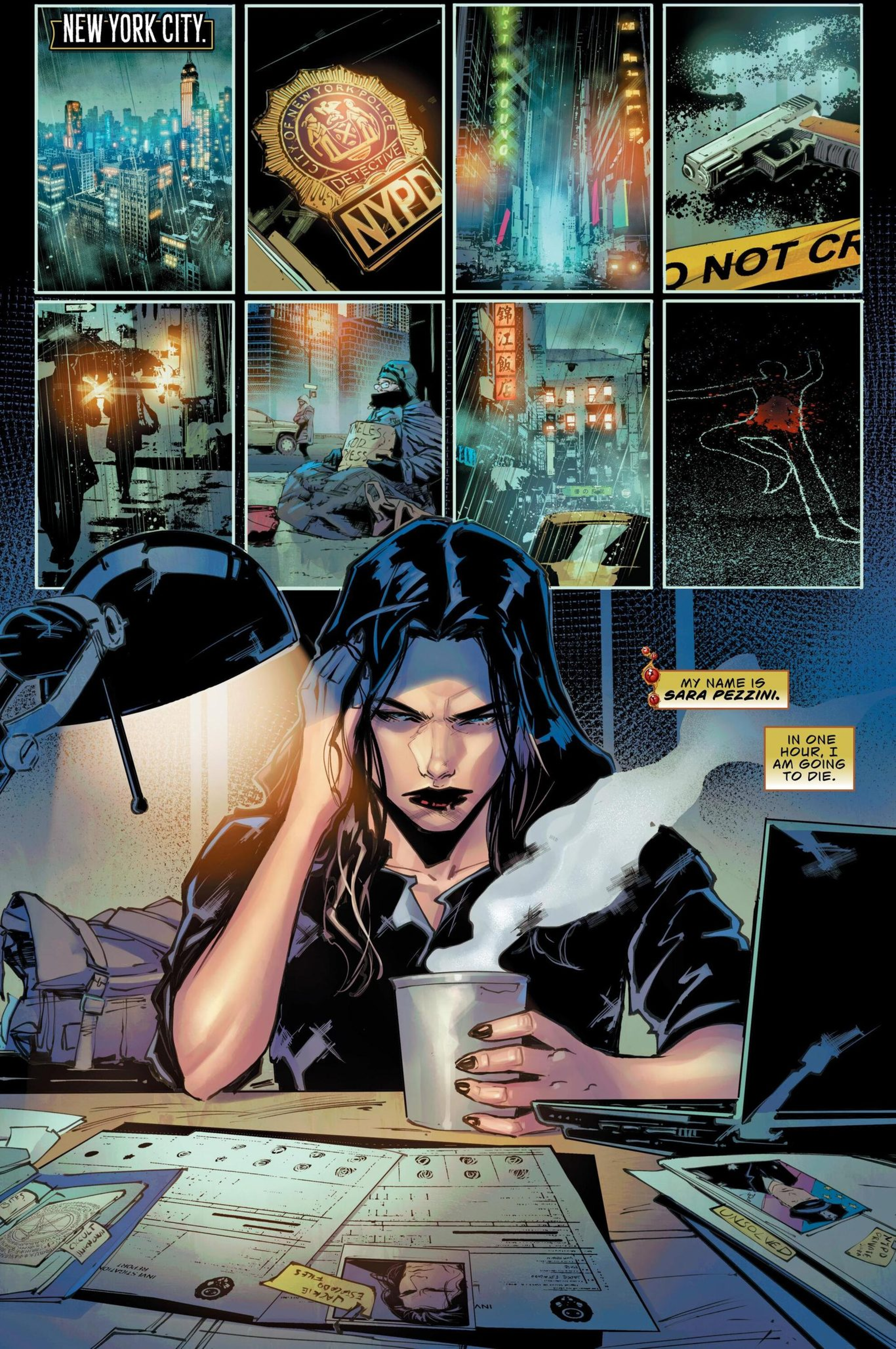
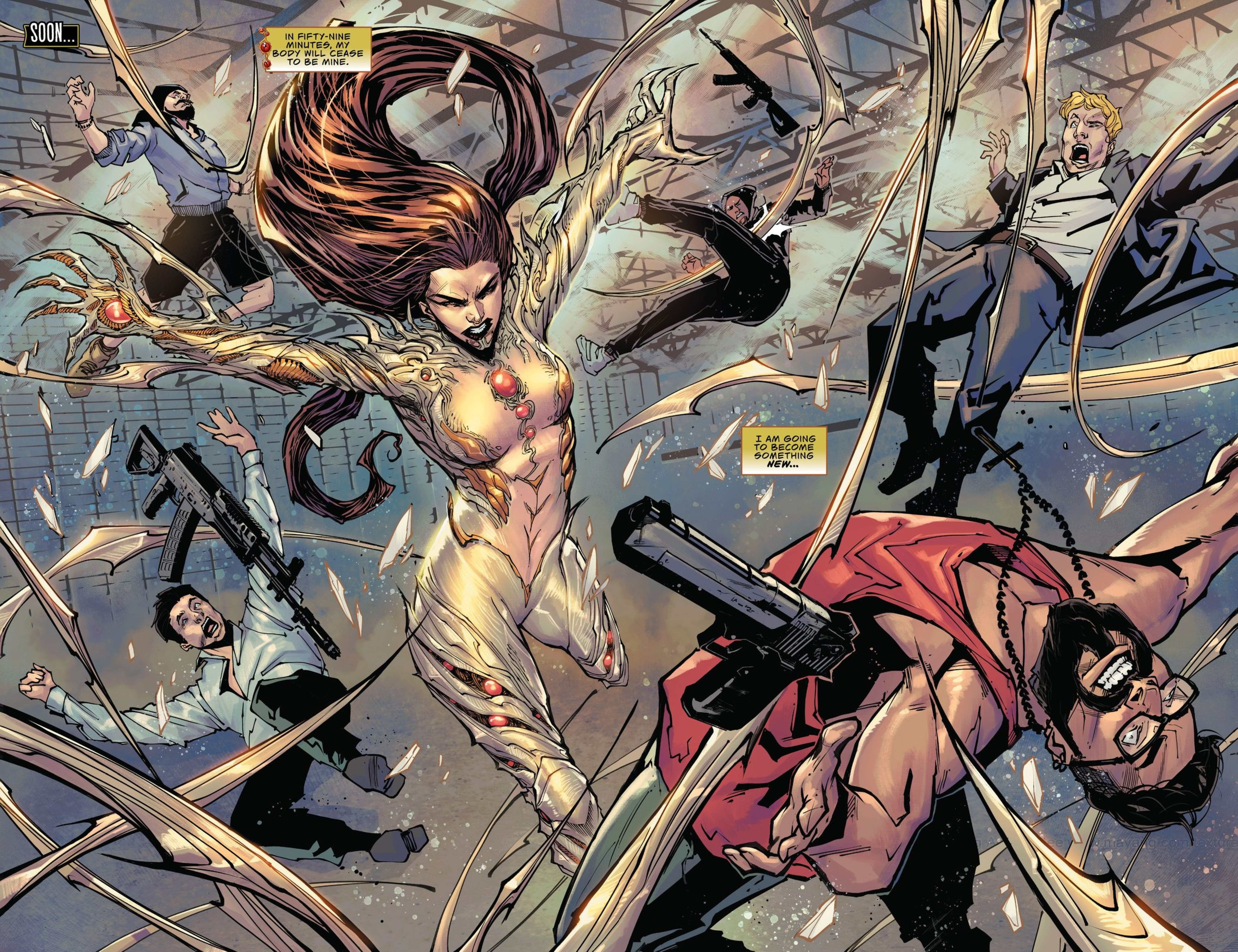
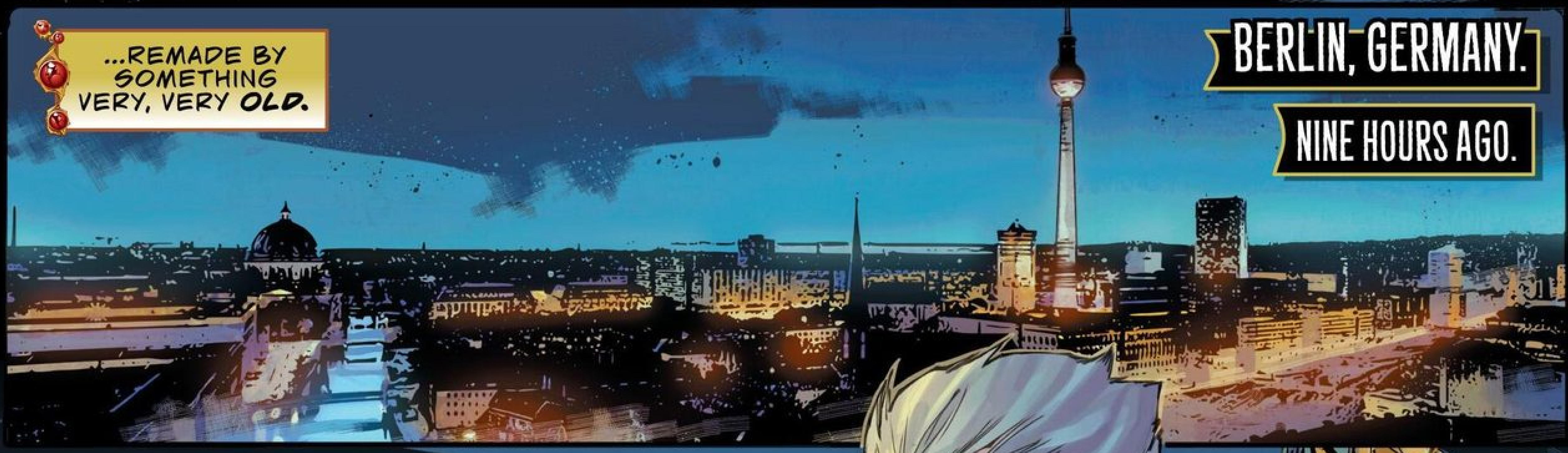
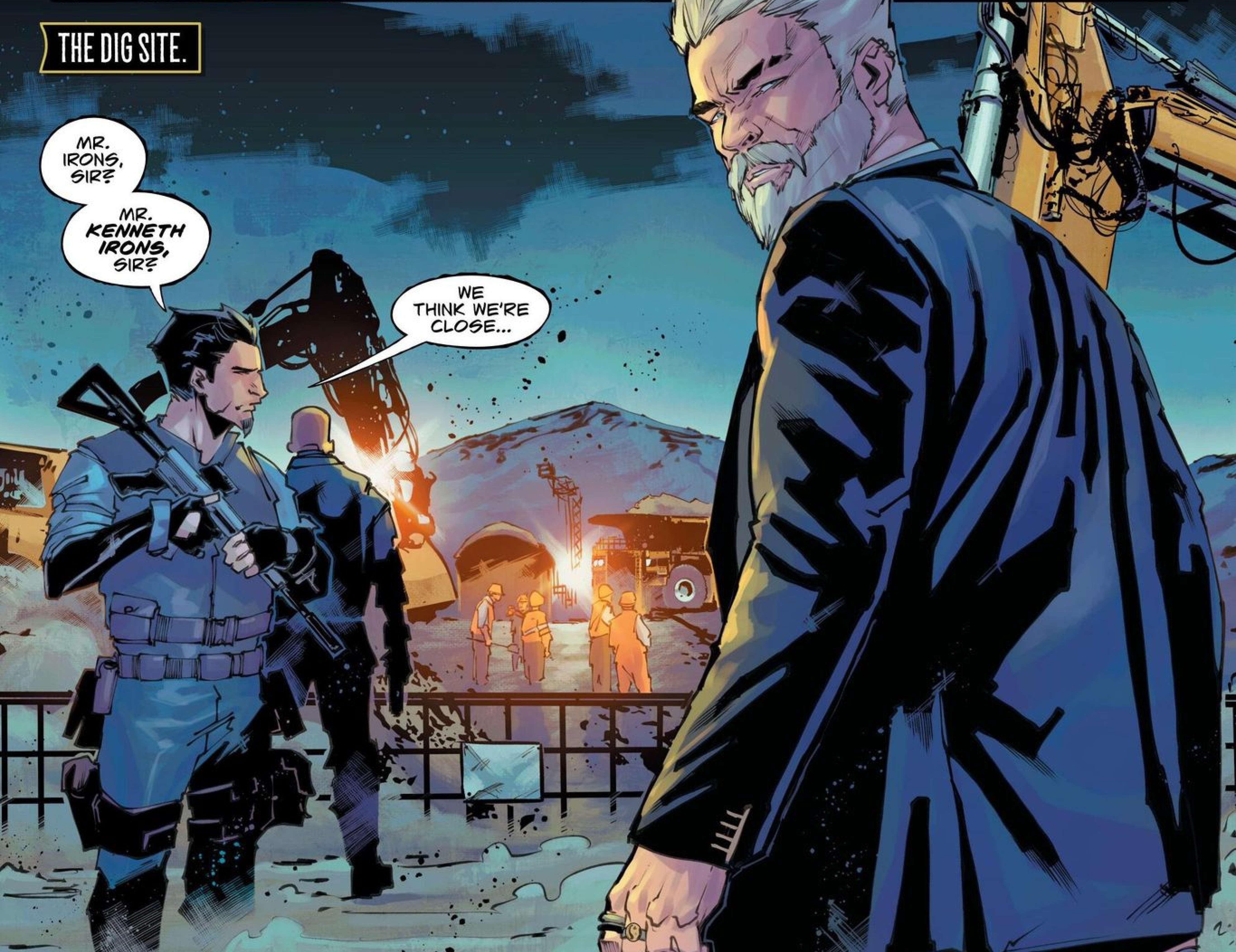
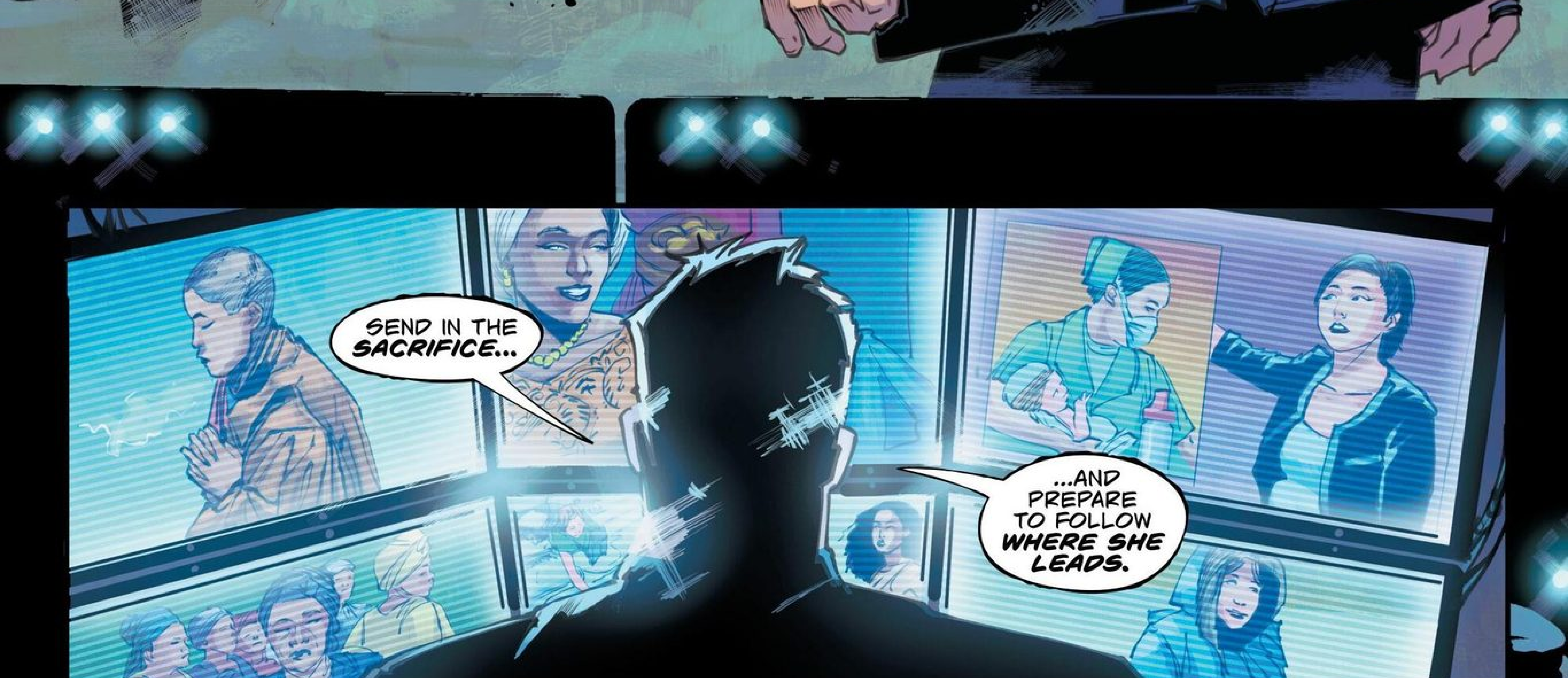
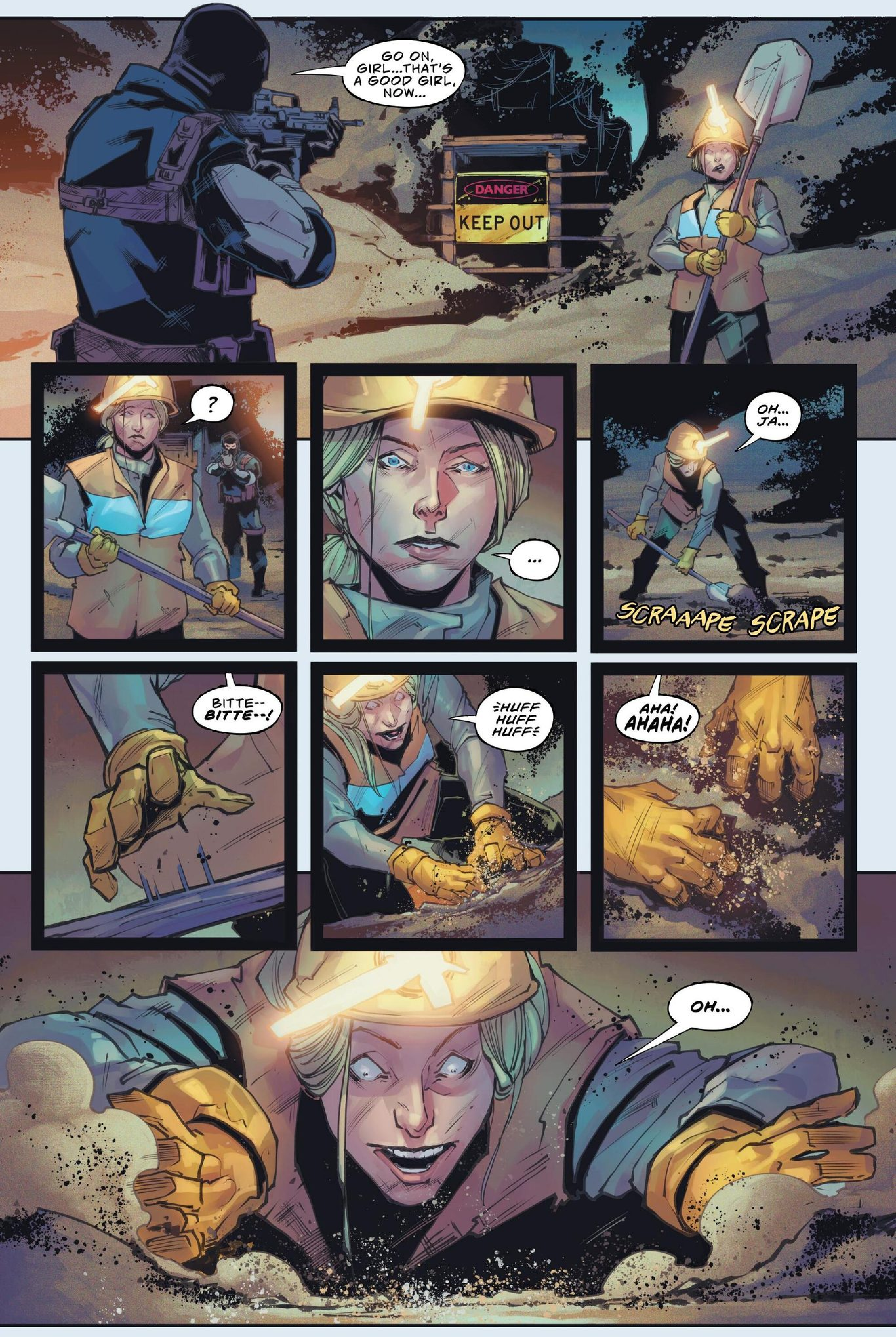

NEW YORK CITY.
CITY OF NEW YORK POLICE
DETECTIVE
NYPD
O NOT CR
MY NAME IS SARA PEZZINI.
IN ONE HOUR, I AM GOING TO DIE.
OCCULT
INVESTIGATION REPORT
JACKIE ESTACADO FILES
UNSOLVED

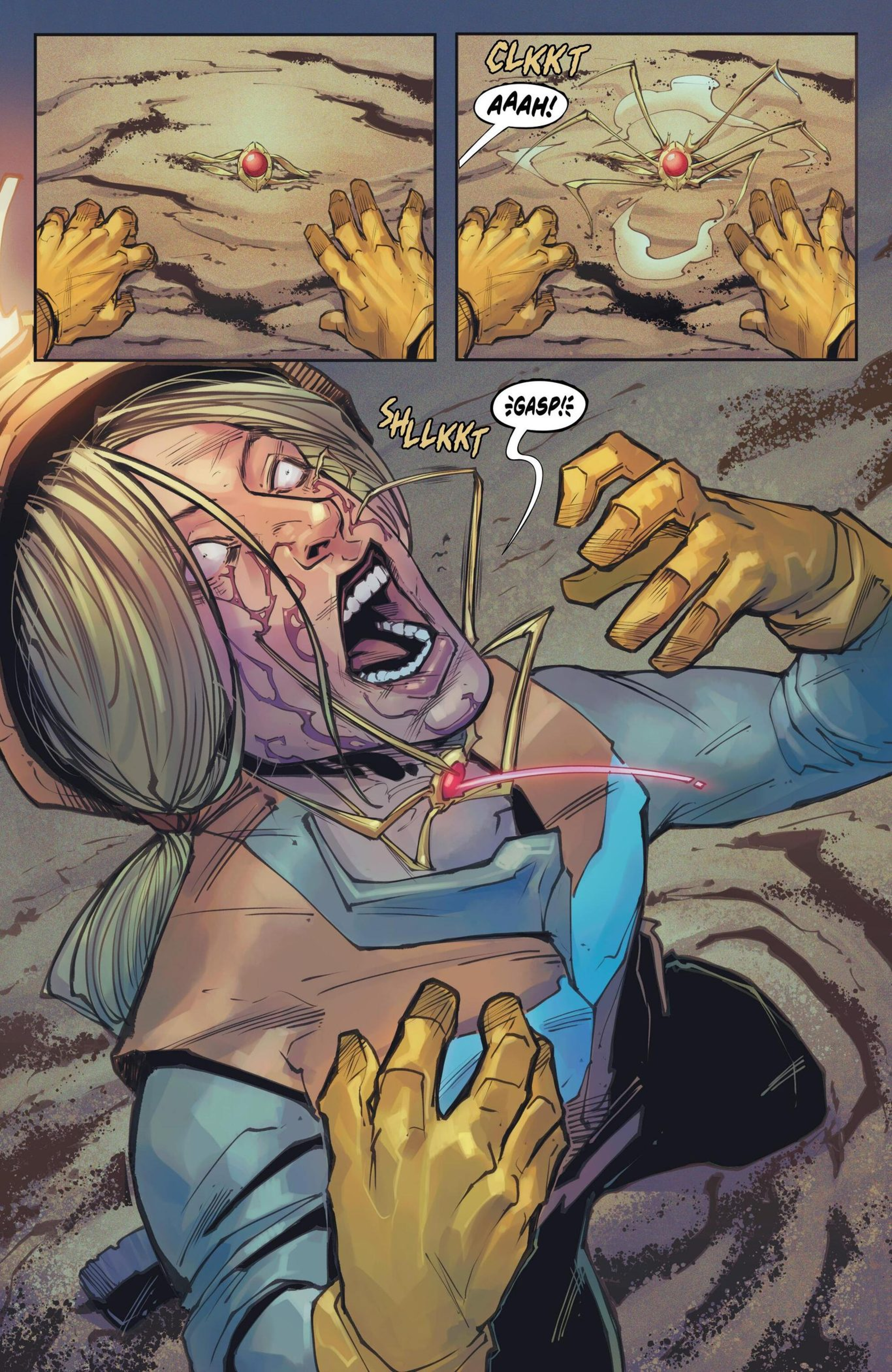

SOON...
IN FIFTY-NINE MINUTES, MY BODY WILL CEASE TO BE MINE.
I AM GOING TO BECOME SOMETHING *NEW*...

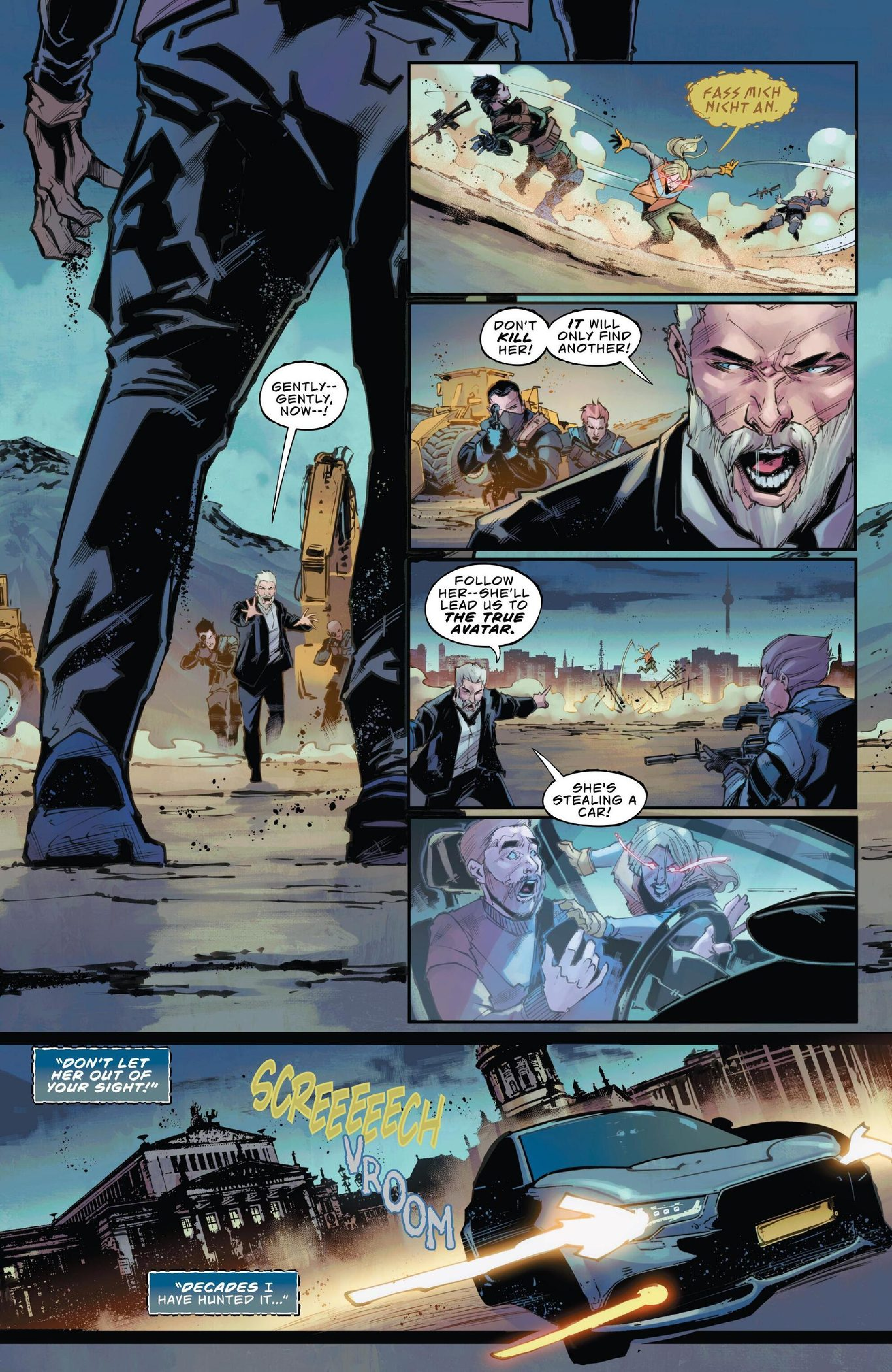

...REMADE BY SOMETHING VERY, VERY *OLD.*
BERLIN, GERMANY.
NINE HOURS AGO.

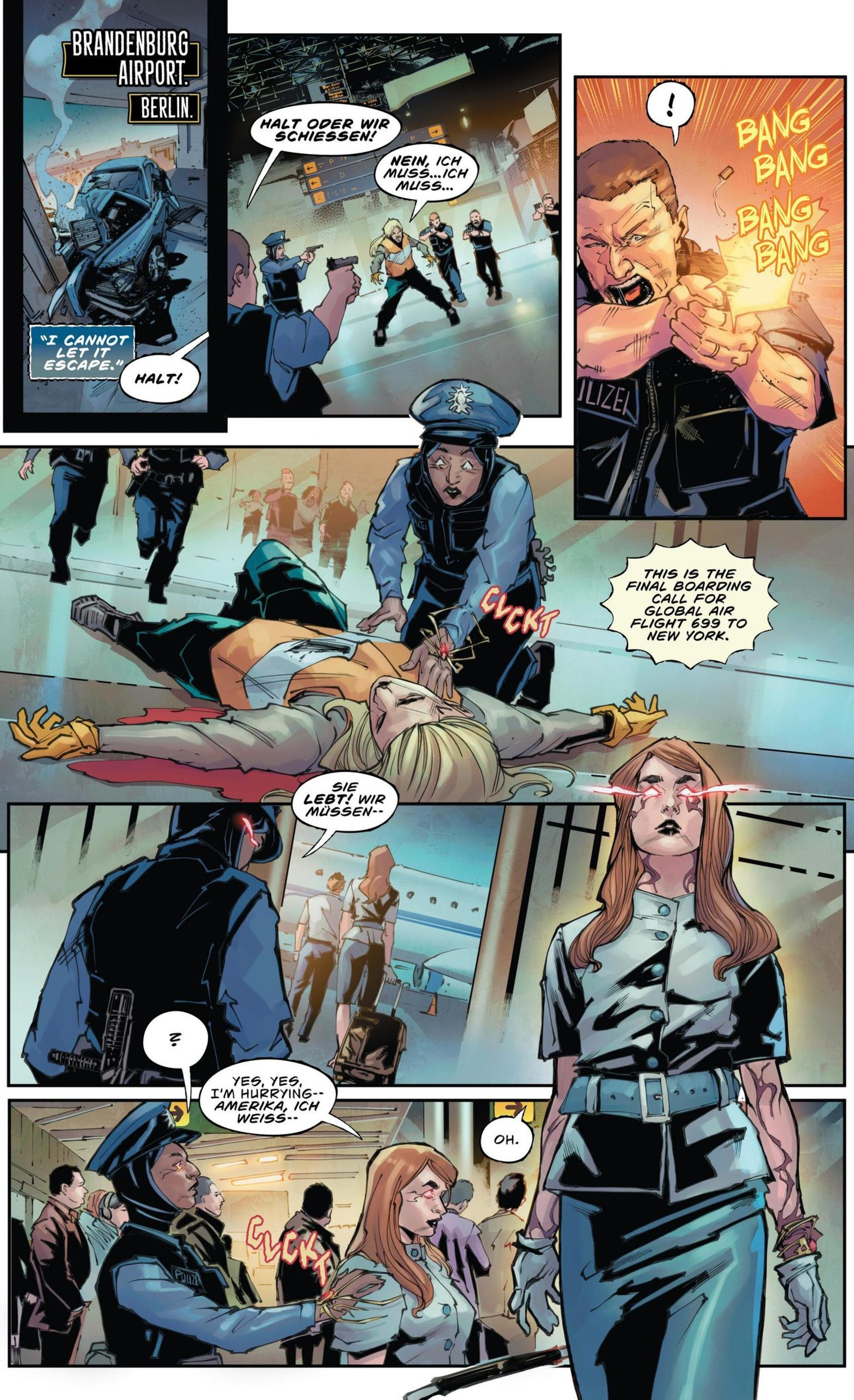

THE DIG SITE.
MR. IRONS, SIR?
MR. ***KENNETH IRONS,*** SIR?
WE THINK WE'RE CLOSE...

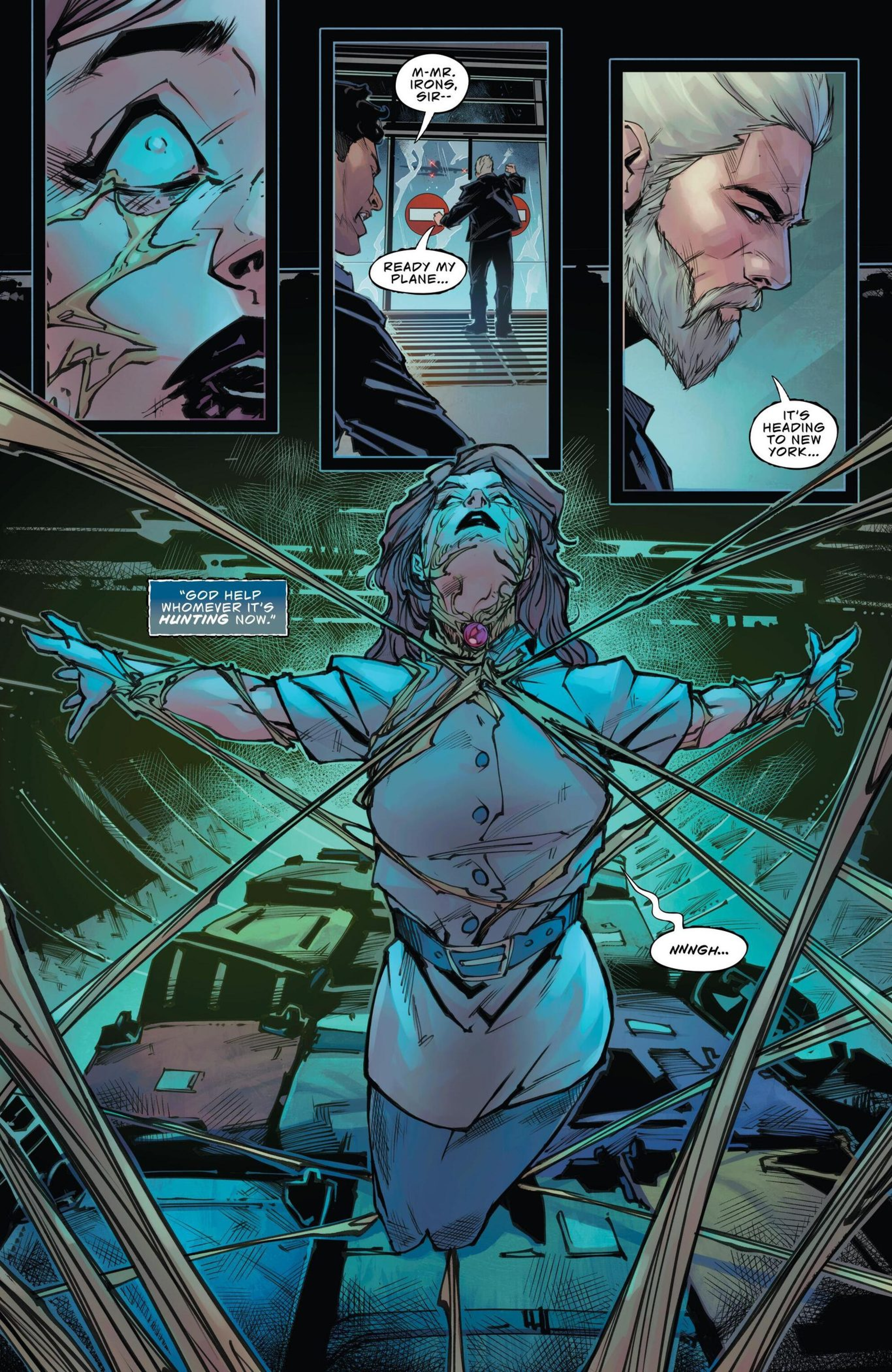

SEND IN THE ***SACRIFICE...***
...AND PREPARE TO FOLLOW ***WHERE SHE LEADS.***

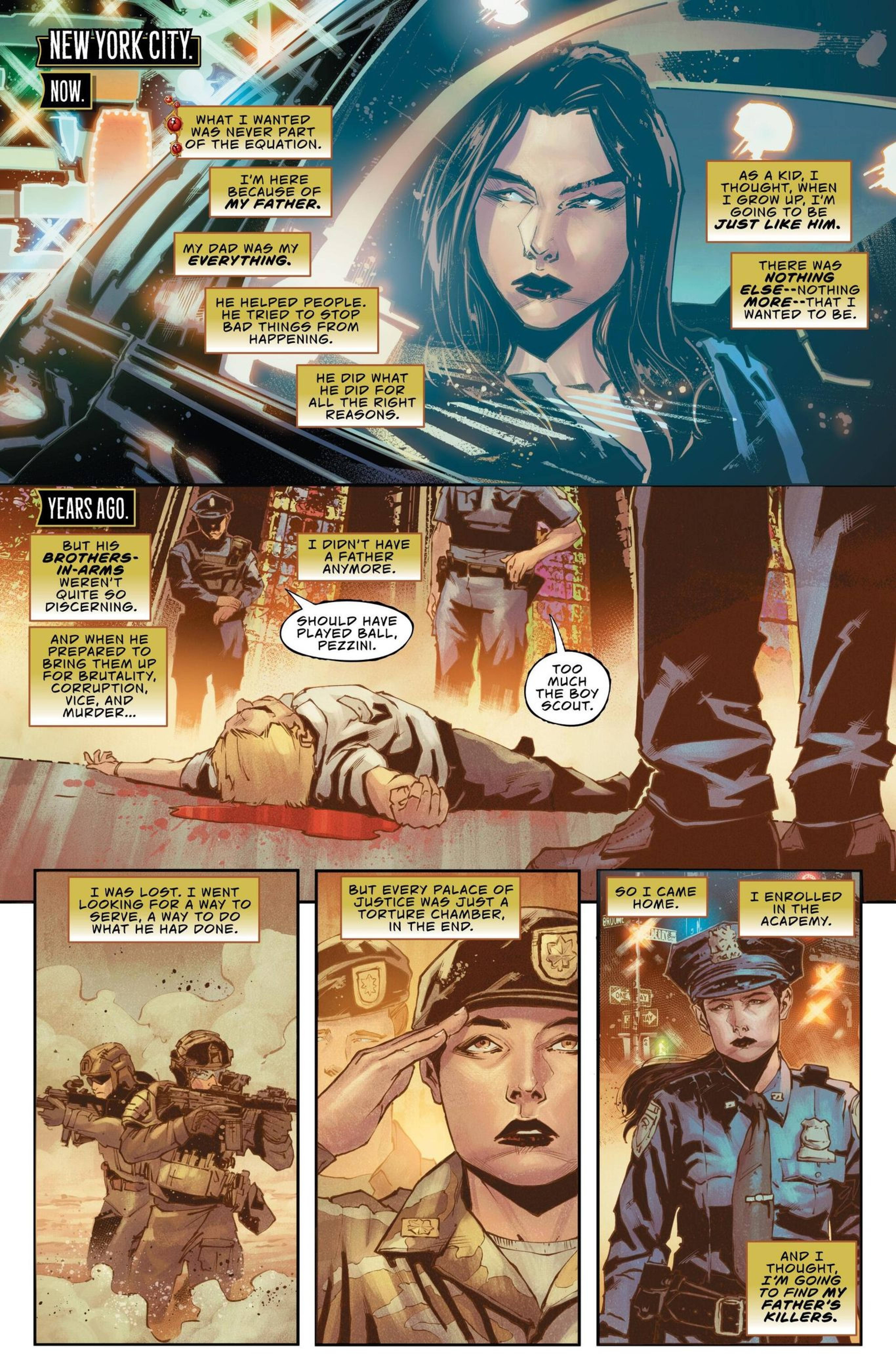

GO ON, GIRL...THAT'S A GOOD GIRL, NOW...
DANGER
KEEP OUT
?
...
OH... JA...
SCRAAAPE SCRAPE
BITTE-- BITTE--!
HUFF HUFF HUFF
AHA! AHAHA!
OH...

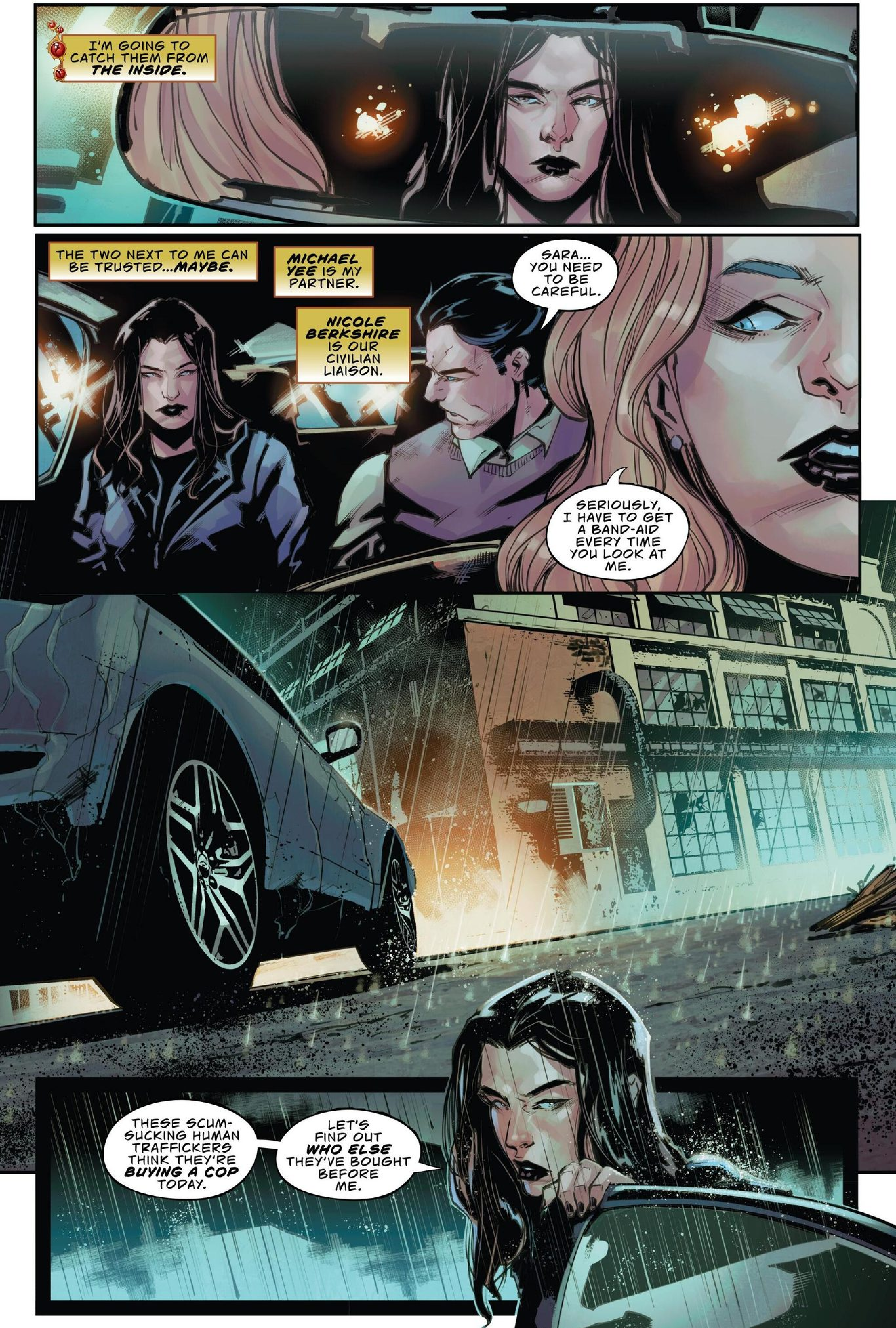

CLKKT
AAAH!
SHLLKKT
GASP!

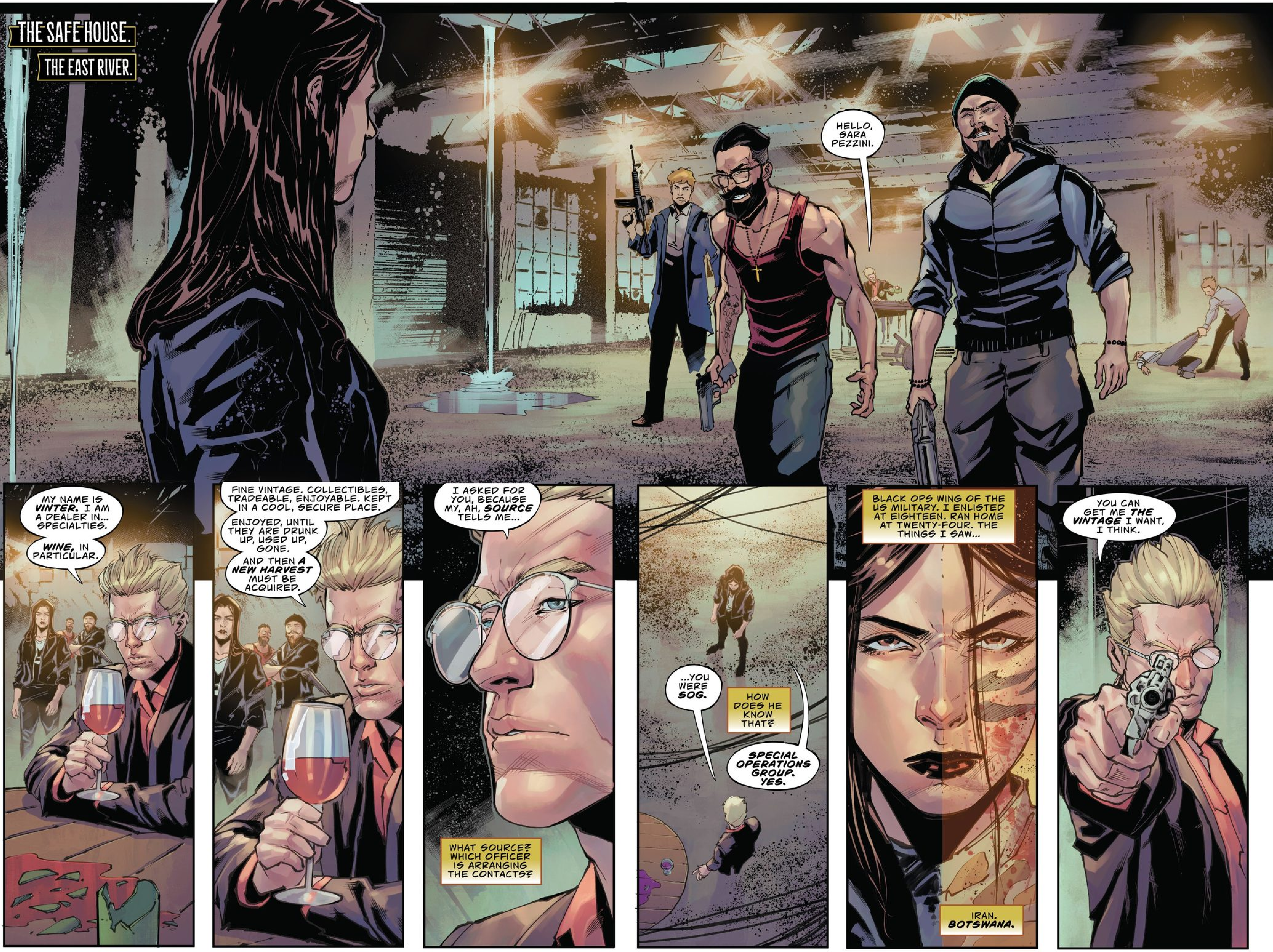

GENTLY-- GENTLY, NOW--!
FASS MICH NICHT AN.
DON'T KILL HER!
IT WILL ONLY FIND ANOTHER!
FOLLOW HER--SHE'LL LEAD US TO THE TRUE AVATAR.
SHE'S STEALING A CAR!
"DON'T LET HER OUT OF YOUR SIGHT!"
SCREEEEEECH
VROOM
"DECADES I HAVE HUNTED IT..."

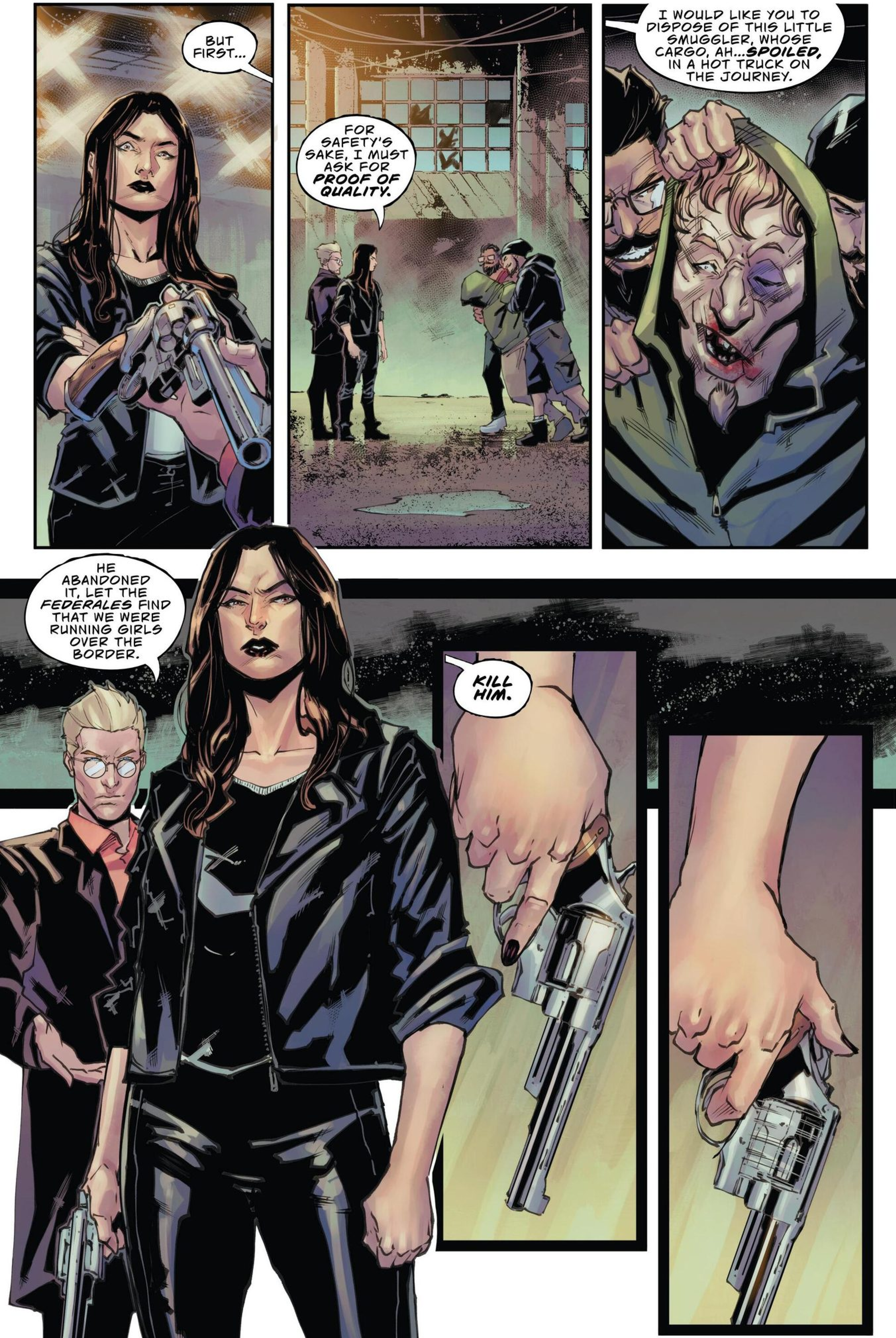

BRANDENBURG AIRPORT.
BERLIN.
"I CANNOT LET IT ESCAPE."
HALT!
HALT ODER WIR SCHIESSEN!
NEIN, ICH MUSS...ICH MUSS...
!
BANG BANG BANG BANG
POLIZEI
CLICKT
THIS IS THE FINAL BOARDING CALL FOR GLOBAL AIR FLIGHT 699 TO NEW YORK.
SIE LEBT! WIR MÜSSEN--
?
YES, YES, I'M HURRYING-- AMERIKA, ICH WEISS--
OH.
CLICKT

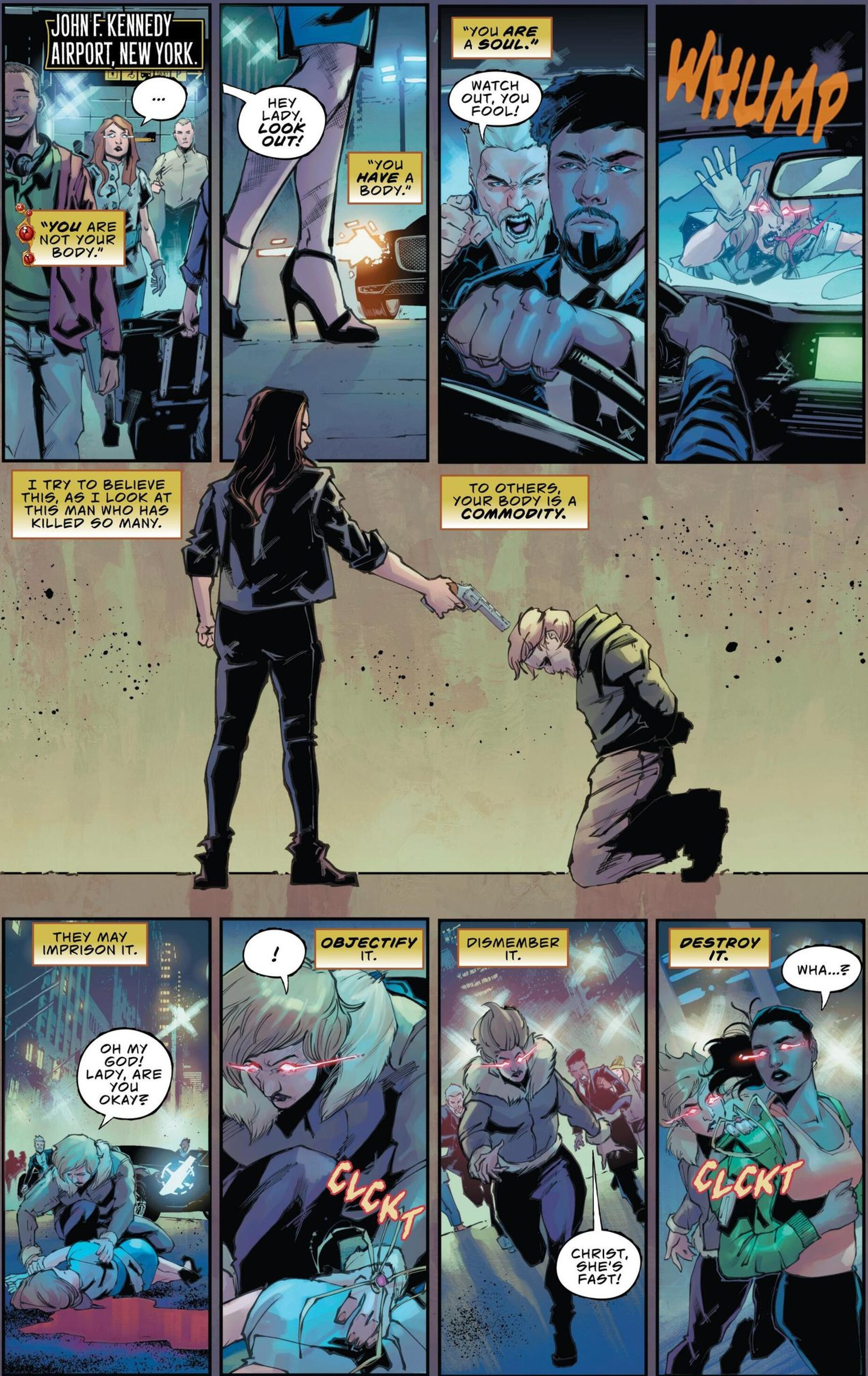

M-MR. IRONS, SIR--
READY MY PLANE...
IT'S HEADING TO NEW YORK...
"GOD HELP WHOMEVER IT'S HUNTING NOW."
NNNGH...

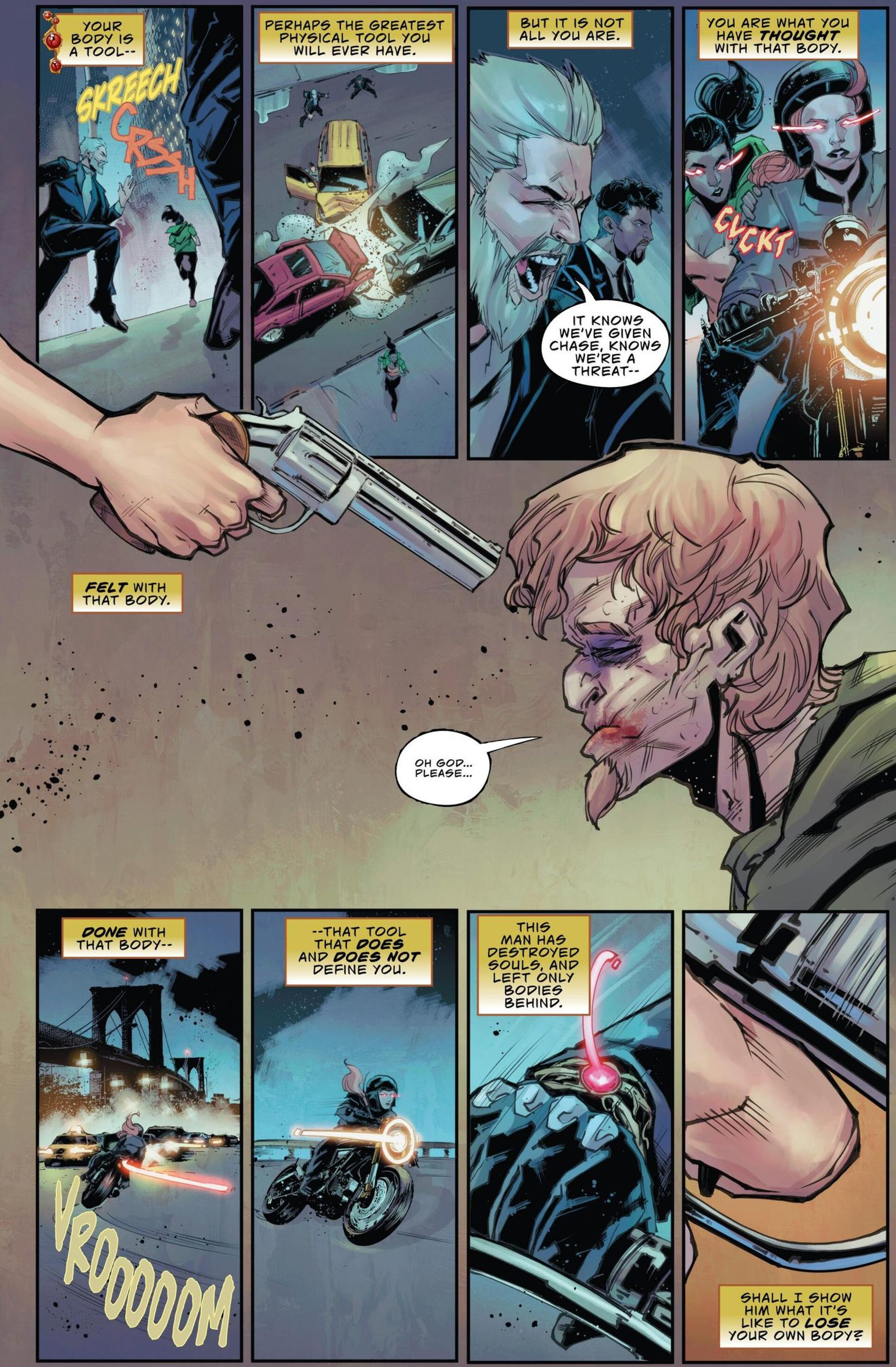

NEW YORK CITY.
NOW.
WHAT I WANTED WAS NEVER PART OF THE EQUATION.
I'M HERE BECAUSE OF *MY FATHER.*
MY DAD WAS MY *EVERYTHING.*
HE HELPED PEOPLE. HE TRIED TO STOP BAD THINGS FROM HAPPENING.
HE DID WHAT HE DID FOR ALL THE RIGHT REASONS.
AS A KID, I THOUGHT, WHEN I GROW UP, I'M GOING TO BE *JUST LIKE HIM.*
THERE WAS *NOTHING ELSE*--NOTHING *MORE*--THAT I WANTED TO BE.
YEARS AGO.
BUT HIS *BROTHERS-IN-ARMS* WEREN'T QUITE SO DISCERNING.
AND WHEN HE PREPARED TO BRING THEM UP FOR BRUTALITY, CORRUPTION, VICE, AND MURDER...
I DIDN'T HAVE A FATHER ANYMORE.
SHOULD HAVE PLAYED BALL, PEZZINI.
TOO MUCH THE BOY SCOUT.
I WAS LOST. I WENT LOOKING FOR A WAY TO SERVE, A WAY TO DO WHAT HE HAD DONE.
BUT EVERY PALACE OF JUSTICE WAS JUST A TORTURE CHAMBER, IN THE END.
SO I CAME HOME.
I ENROLLED IN THE ACADEMY.
AND I THOUGHT, *I'M GOING TO FIND MY FATHER'S KILLERS.*

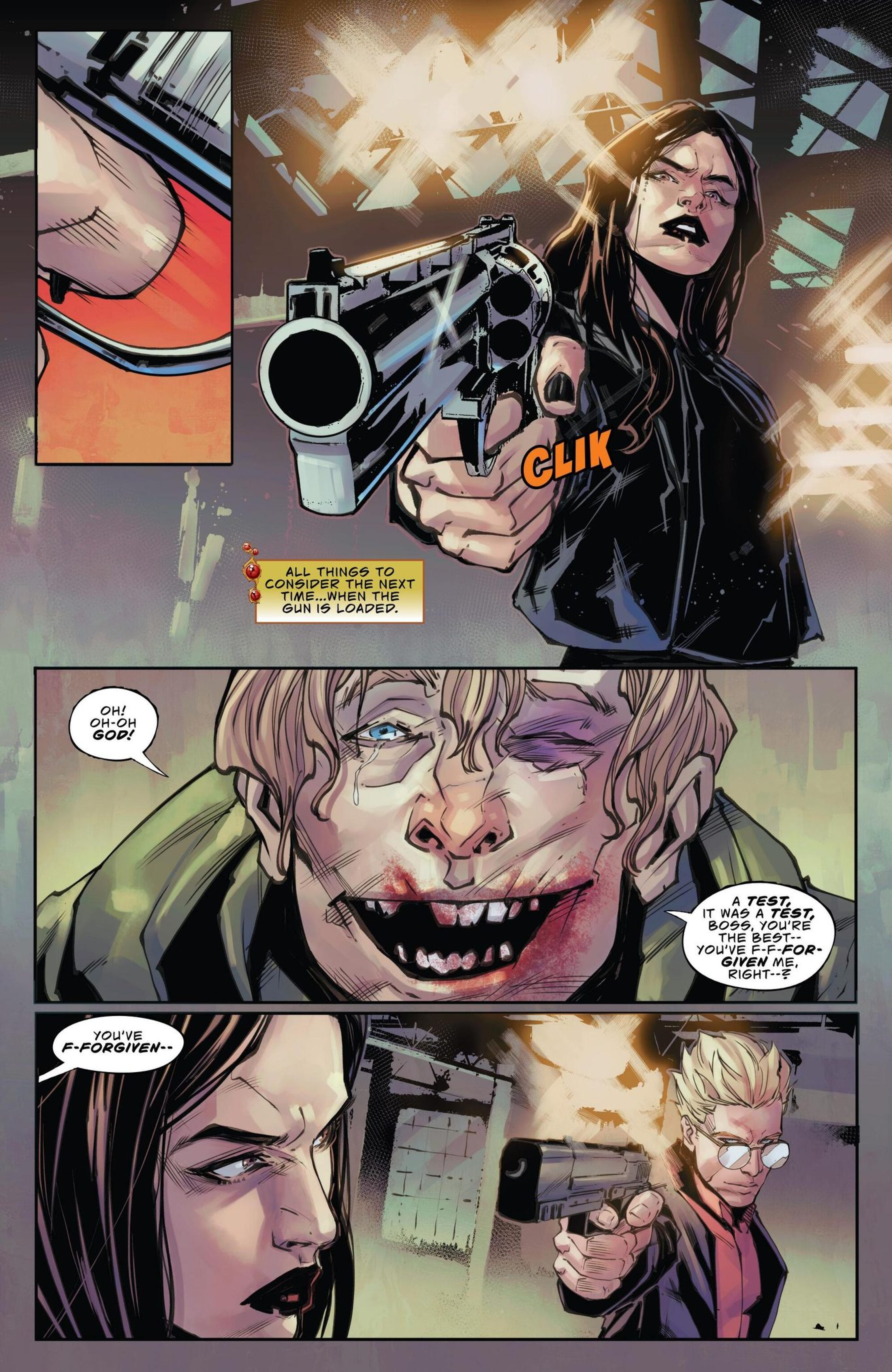

I'M GOING TO CATCH THEM FROM *THE INSIDE.*
THE TWO NEXT TO ME CAN BE TRUSTED...*MAYBE.*
MICHAEL YEE IS MY PARTNER.
NICOLE BERKSHIRE IS OUR CIVILIAN LIAISON.
SARA... YOU NEED TO BE CAREFUL.
SERIOUSLY, I HAVE TO GET A BAND-AID EVERY TIME YOU LOOK AT ME.
THESE SCUM-SUCKING HUMAN TRAFFICKERS THINK THEY'RE *BUYING A COP* TODAY.
LET'S FIND OUT *WHO ELSE* THEY'VE BOUGHT BEFORE ME.

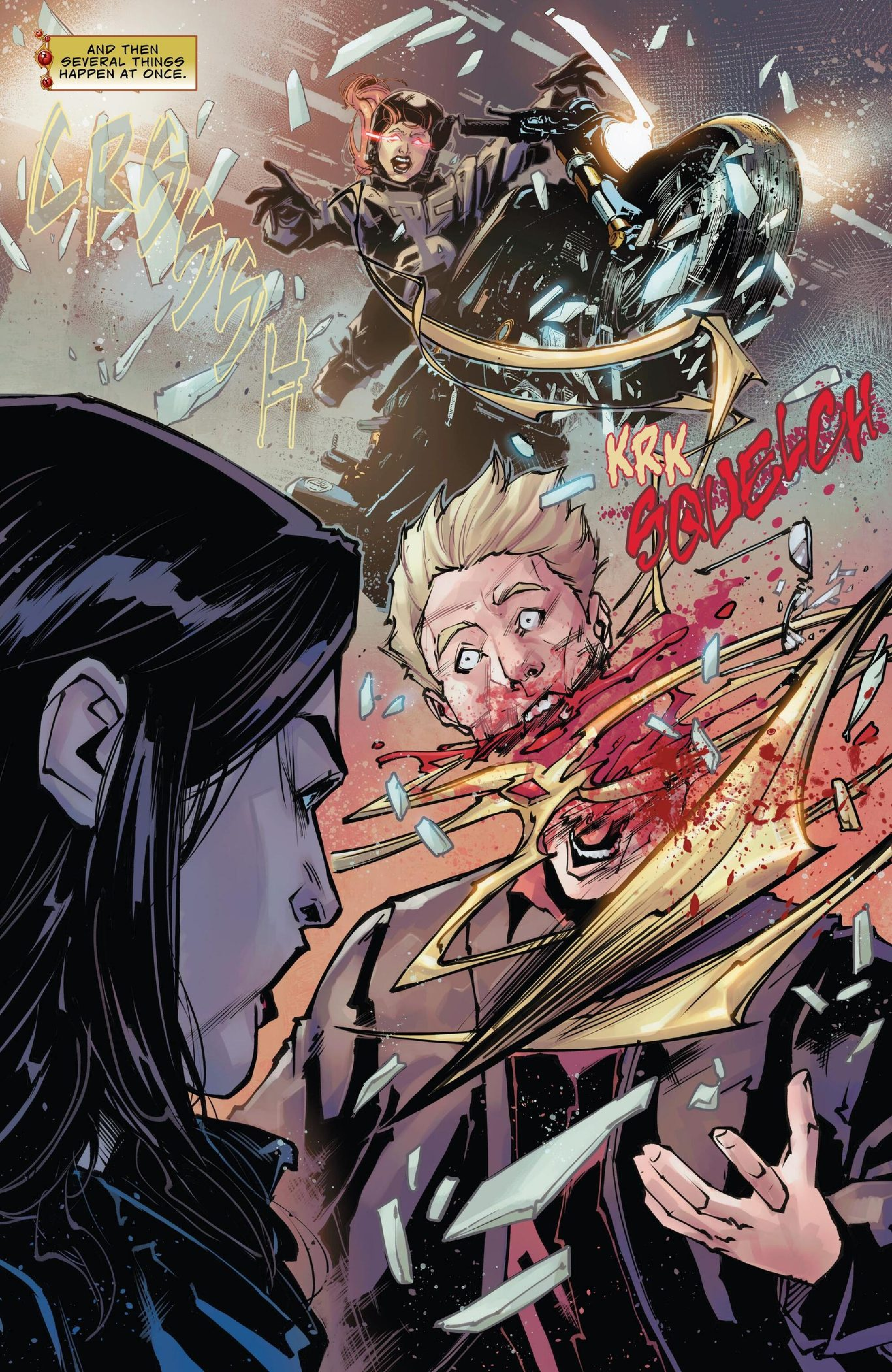

THE SAFE HOUSE.
THE EAST RIVER.
HELLO, SARA PEZZINI.
MY NAME IS **VINTER.** I AM A DEALER IN... SPECIALTIES.
WINE, IN PARTICULAR.
FINE VINTAGE. COLLECTIBLES, TRADEABLE, ENJOYABLE. KEPT IN A COOL, SECURE PLACE.
ENJOYED, UNTIL THEY ARE DRUNK UP, USED UP, GONE.
AND THEN **A NEW HARVEST** MUST BE ACQUIRED.
I ASKED FOR YOU, BECAUSE MY, AH, **SOURCE** TELLS ME...
WHAT SOURCE? WHICH OFFICER IS ARRANGING THE CONTACTS?
...YOU WERE **SOG.**
HOW DOES HE KNOW THAT?
SPECIAL OPERATIONS GROUP. YES.
BLACK OPS WING OF THE US MILITARY. I ENLISTED AT EIGHTEEN. RAN HOME AT TWENTY-FOUR. THE THINGS I SAW...
IRAN. **BOTSWANA.**
YOU CAN GET ME **THE VINTAGE** I WANT, I THINK.

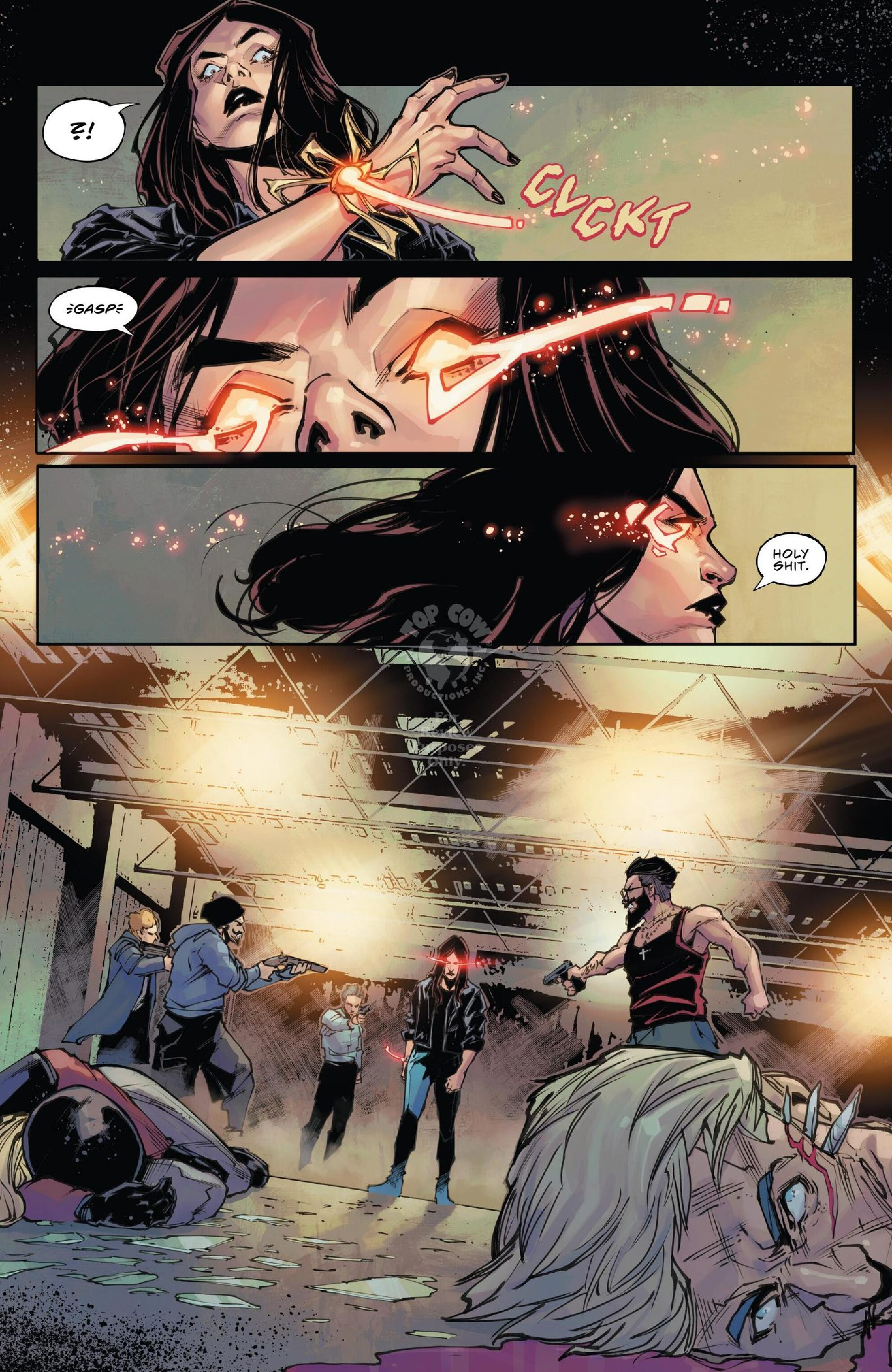

BUT FIRST...
FOR SAFETY'S SAKE, I MUST ASK FOR **PROOF OF QUALITY.**
I WOULD LIKE YOU TO DISPOSE OF THIS LITTLE SMUGGLER, WHOSE CARGO, AH...**SPOILED,** IN A HOT TRUCK ON THE JOURNEY.
HE ABANDONED IT, LET THE *FEDERALES* FIND THAT WE WERE RUNNING GIRLS OVER THE BORDER.
KILL HIM.


JOHN F. KENNEDY AIRPORT, NEW YORK.
...
"YOU ARE NOT YOUR BODY."
HEY LADY, LOOK OUT!
"YOU HAVE A BODY."
"YOU ARE A SOUL."
WATCH OUT, YOU FOOL!
WHUMP
I TRY TO BELIEVE THIS, AS I LOOK AT THIS MAN WHO HAS KILLED SO MANY.
TO OTHERS, YOUR BODY IS A COMMODITY.
THEY MAY IMPRISON IT.
OH MY GOD! LADY, ARE YOU OKAY?
OBJECTIFY IT.
!
CLCKT
DISMEMBER IT.
CHRIST, SHE'S FAST!
DESTROY IT.
WHA...?
CLCKT


YOUR BODY IS A TOOL--
SKREECH
CRSSH
PERHAPS THE GREATEST PHYSICAL TOOL YOU WILL EVER HAVE.
BUT IT IS NOT ALL YOU ARE.
IT KNOWS WE'VE GIVEN CHASE, KNOWS WE'RE A THREAT--
YOU ARE WHAT YOU HAVE THOUGHT WITH THAT BODY.
CLCKT
FELT WITH THAT BODY.
OH GOD... PLEASE...
DONE WITH THAT BODY--
VROOOOOM
--THAT TOOL THAT DOES AND DOES NOT DEFINE YOU.
THIS MAN HAS DESTROYED SOULS, AND LEFT ONLY BODIES BEHIND.
SHALL I SHOW HIM WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LOSE YOUR OWN BODY?


CLIK
ALL THINGS TO CONSIDER THE NEXT TIME...WHEN THE GUN IS LOADED.
OH! OH-OH *GOD!*
A *TEST,* IT WAS A *TEST,* BOSS, YOU'RE THE BEST-- YOU'VE F-F-*FORGIVEN* ME, RIGHT--?
YOU'VE *F-FORGIVEN--*


AND THEN SEVERAL THINGS HAPPEN AT ONCE.
CRSSSSH
KRK
SQUELCH


?!
CLCKT
=GASP=
HOLY SHIT.

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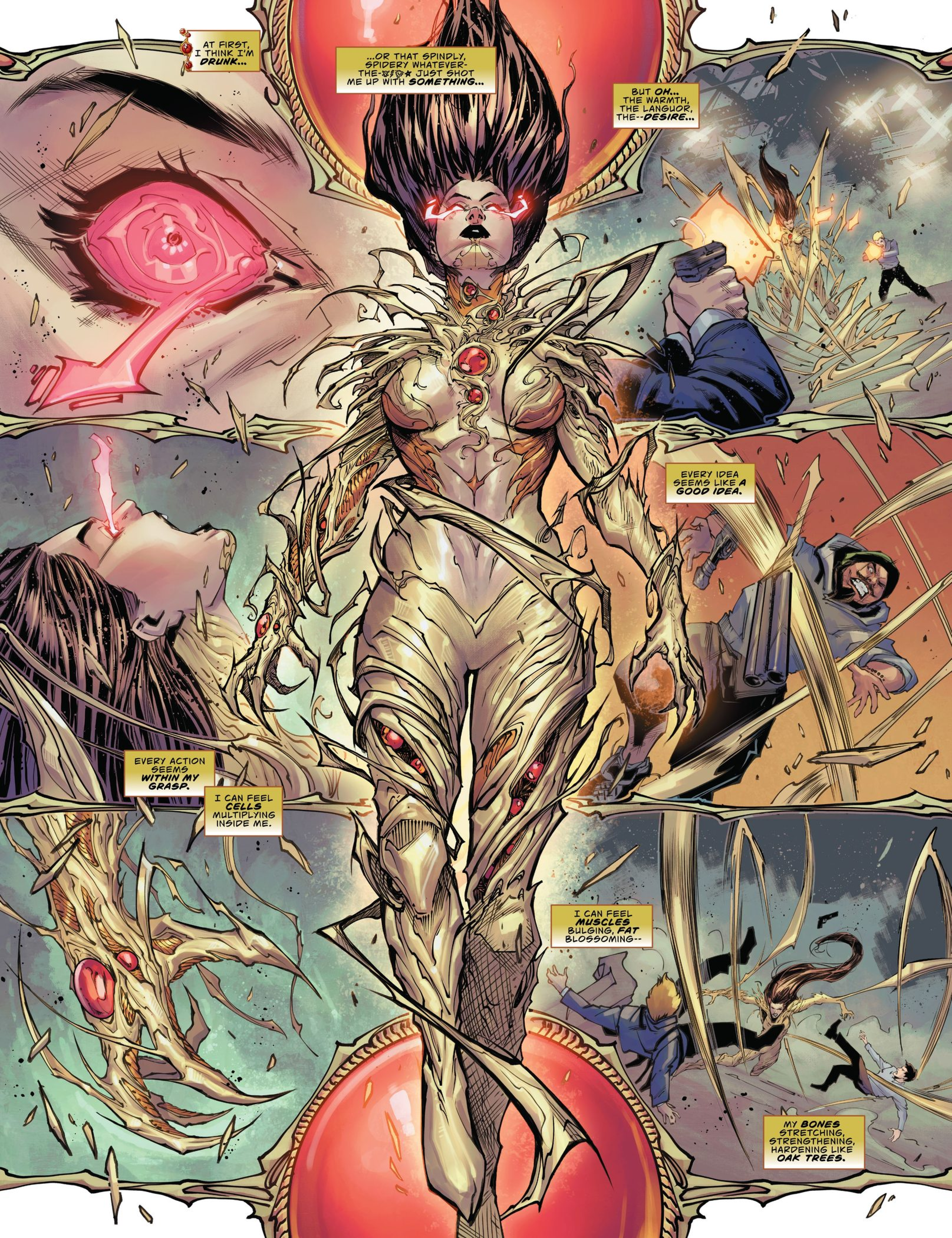
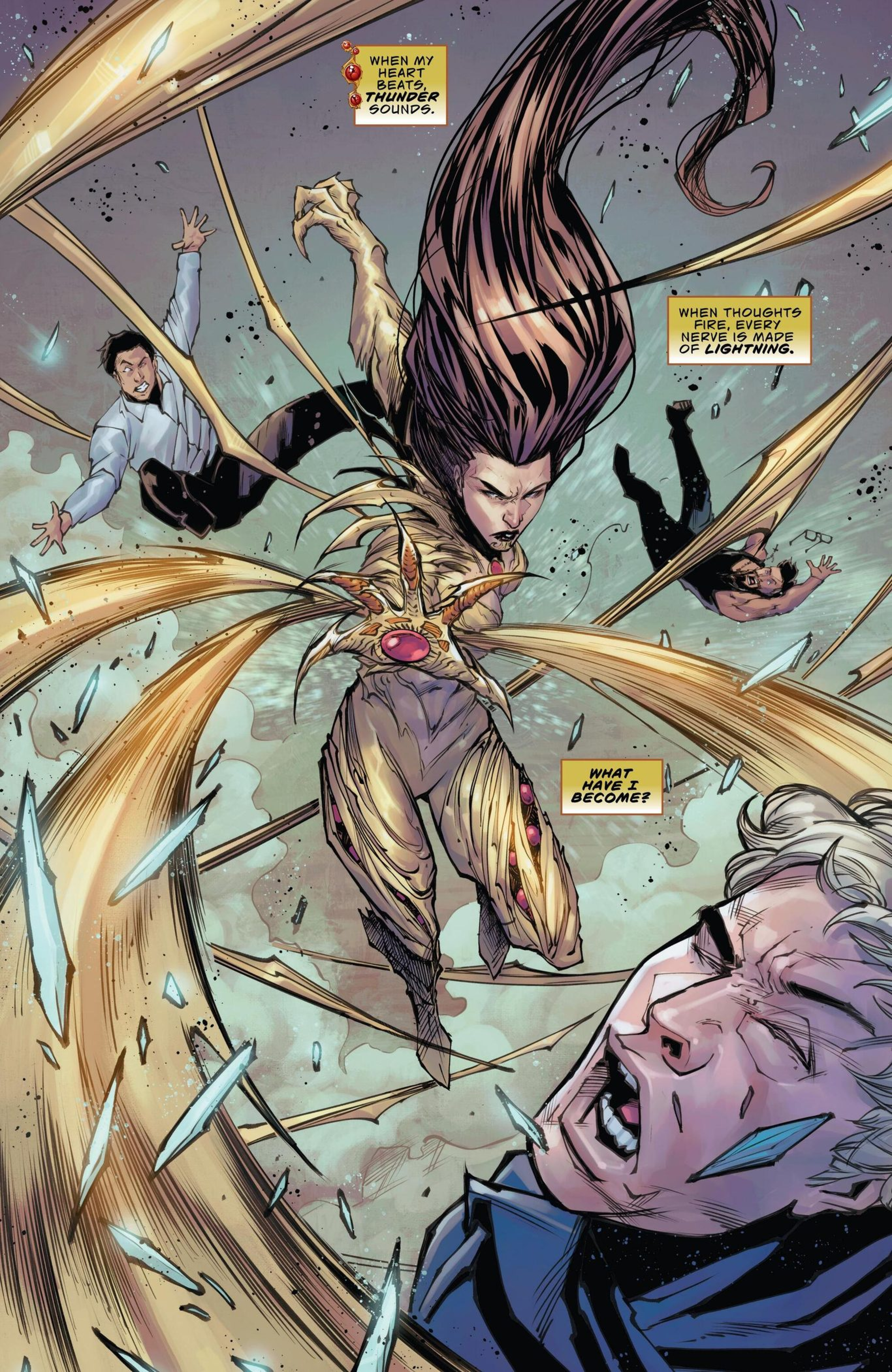
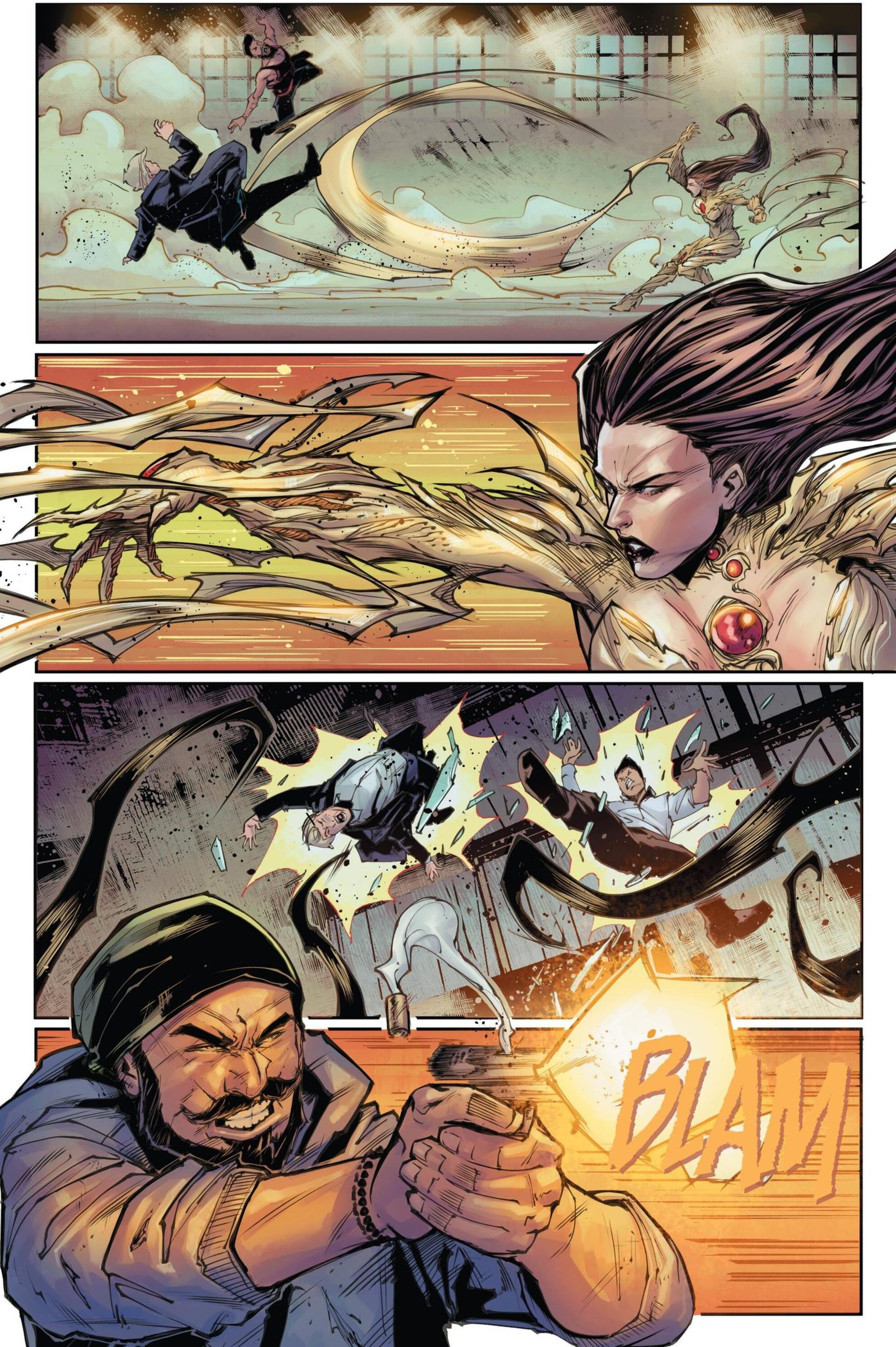
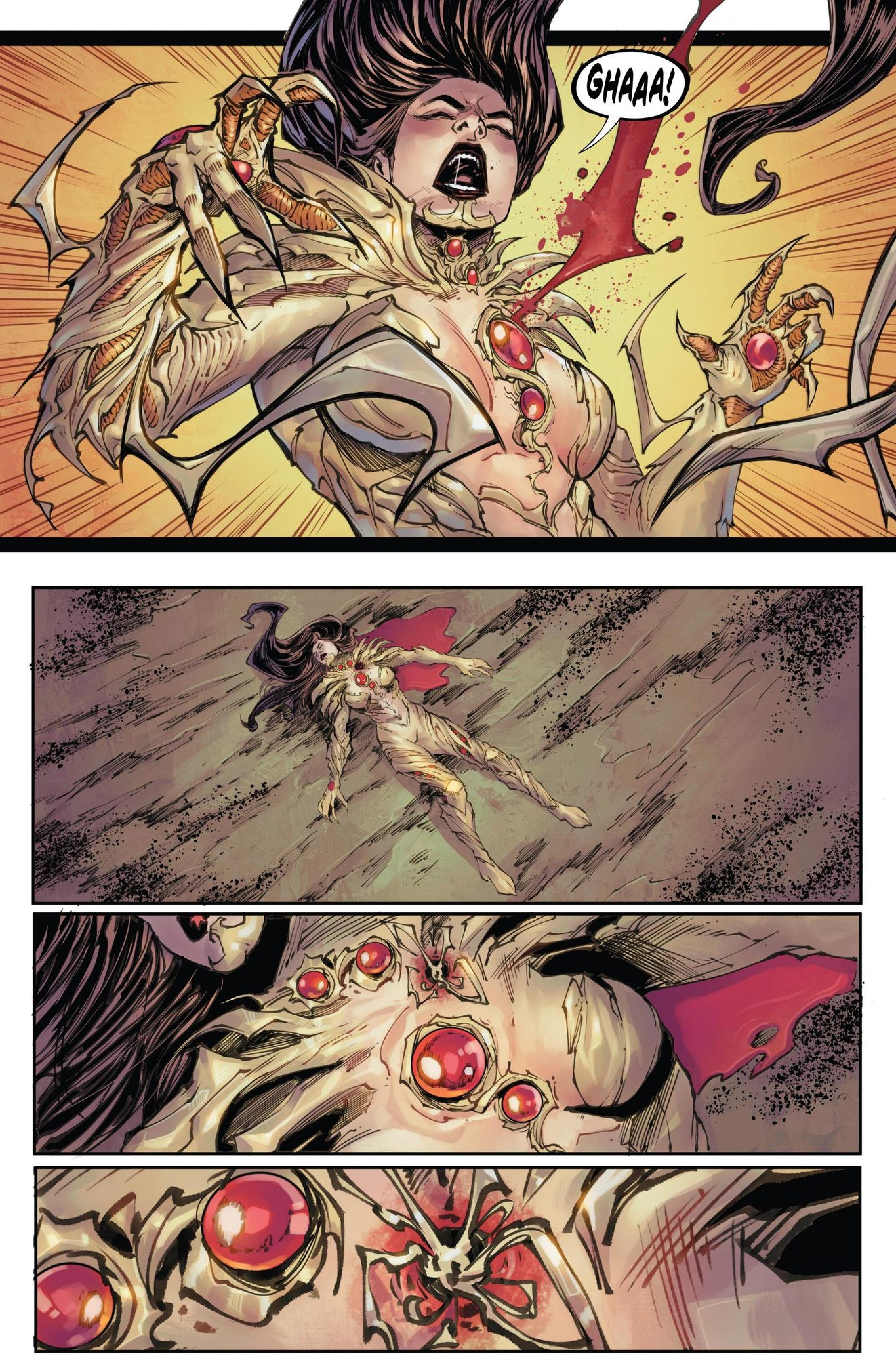
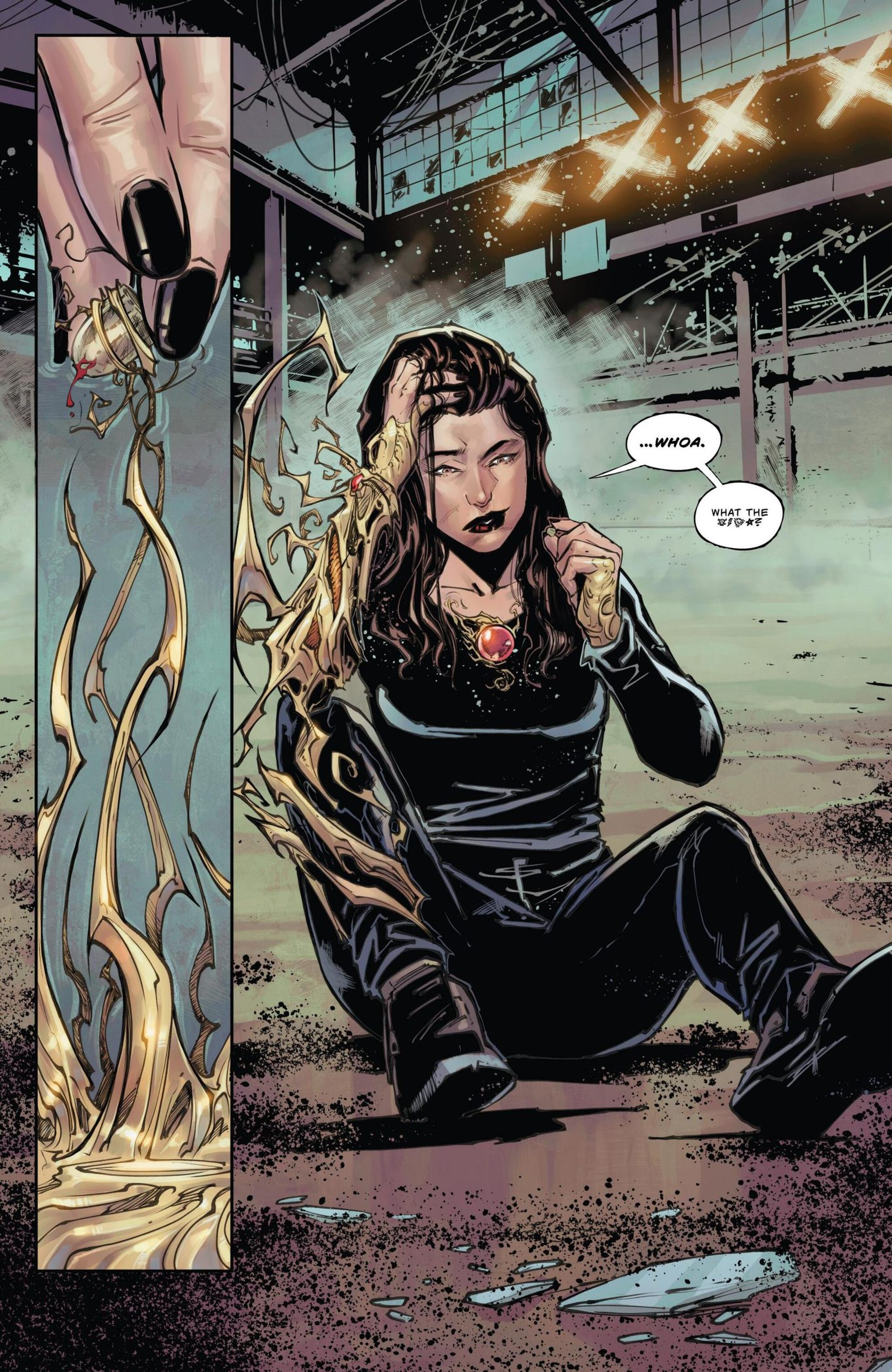
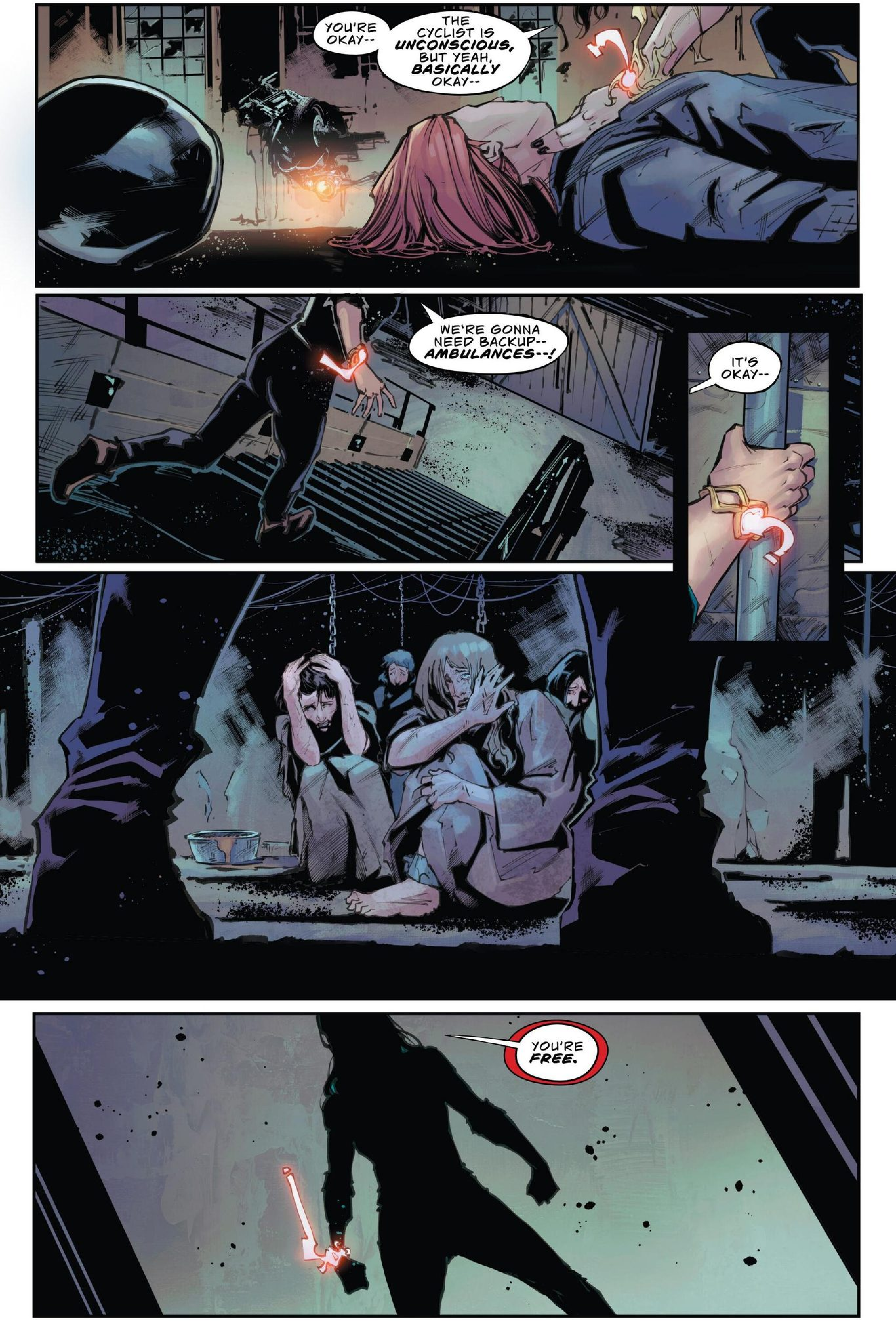

AT FIRST, I THINK I'M *DRUNK*...
...OR THAT SPINDLY, SPIDERY WHATEVER-THE-#$@★ JUST SHOT ME UP WITH ***SOMETHING***...
BUT *OH*... THE WARMTH, THE LANGUOR, THE--*DESIRE*...
EVERY IDEA SEEMS LIKE ***A GOOD IDEA.***
EVERY ACTION SEEMS ***WITHIN MY GRASP.***
I CAN FEEL ***CELLS*** MULTIPLYING INSIDE ME.
I CAN FEEL ***MUSCLES*** BULGING, ***FAT*** BLOSSOMING--
MY ***BONES*** STRETCHING, STRENGTHENING, HARDENING LIKE ***OAK TREES.***

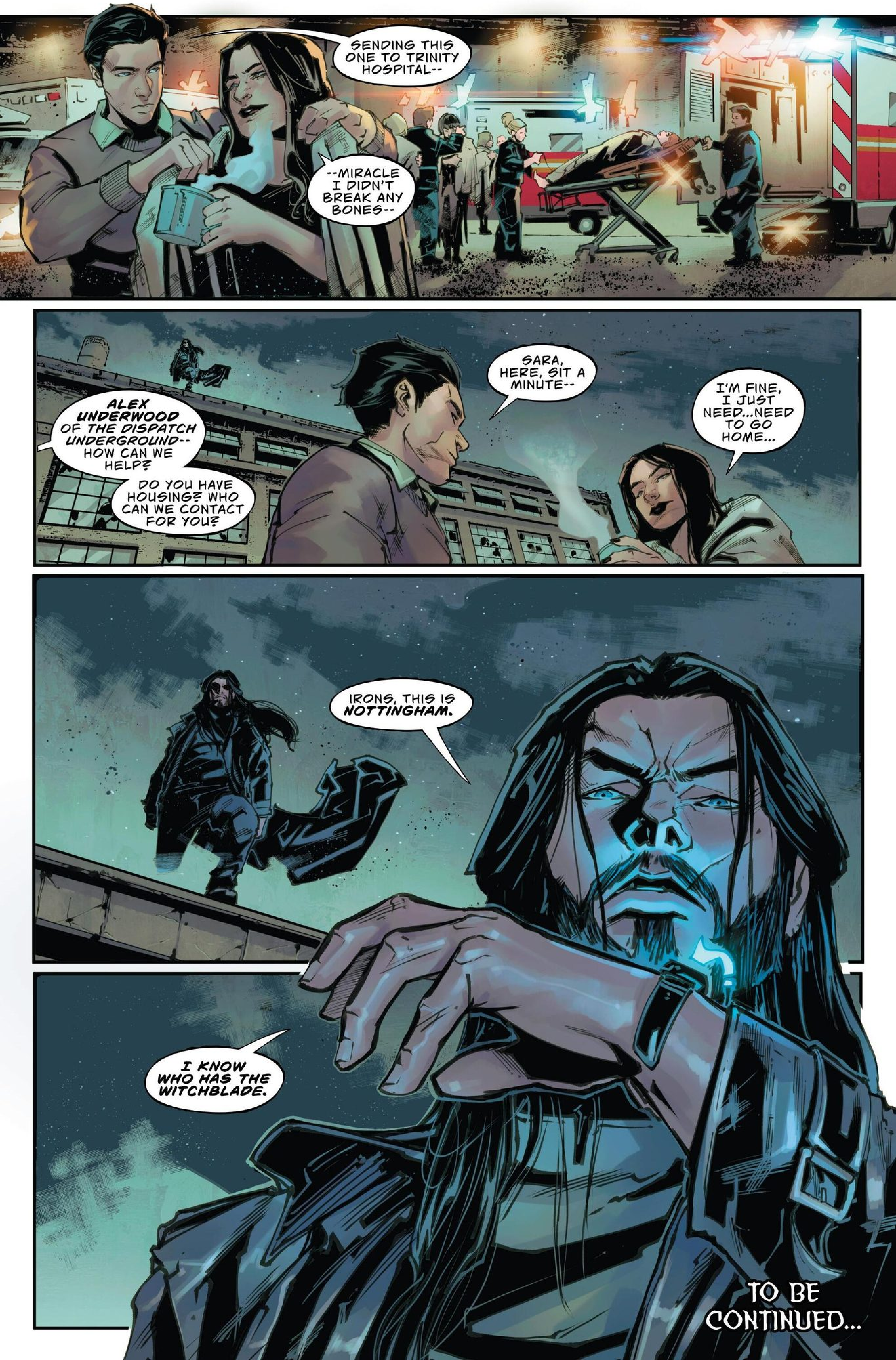

WHEN MY HEART BEATS, ***THUNDER*** SOUNDS.
WHEN THOUGHTS FIRE, EVERY NERVE IS MADE OF ***LIGHTNING.***
WHAT HAVE I BECOME?


BLAM


GHAAA!


...WHOA.
WHAT THE ☼ϟ✺★?


YOU'RE OKAY--
THE CYCLIST IS UNCONSCIOUS, BUT YEAH, BASICALLY OKAY--
WE'RE GONNA NEED BACKUP-- AMBULANCES--!
IT'S OKAY--
YOU'RE FREE.


SENDING THIS ONE TO TRINITY HOSPITAL--
--MIRACLE I DIDN'T BREAK ANY BONES--
ALEX UNDERWOOD OF THE DISPATCH ***UNDERGROUND***-- HOW CAN WE HELP?
DO YOU HAVE HOUSING? WHO CAN WE CONTACT FOR YOU?
SARA, HERE, SIT A MINUTE--
I'M FINE, I JUST NEED...NEED TO GO HOME...
IRONS, THIS IS ***NOTTINGHAM.***
I KNOW WHO HAS THE WITCHBLADE.
TO BE CONTINUED...

Creative Team

Marguerite Bennett is a GLAAD-nominated, New York Times-bestselling comic book writer based in Los Angeles.

Her credits include DC Comics' *Bombshells*, *Batwoman* and *RWBY*, along with *Animosity*, *Horde*, and *Insexts* through Aftershock Comics, and *MOTHER OF MADNESS* with *Game of Thrones* superstar Emilia Clarke for Image Comics. She has written *Might Morphin Power Rangers* for Boom Studios, *Josie and the Pussycats* through Archie, *A-Force* and *Years of Future Past* at Marvel, *Red Sonja* and *Sheena* from Dynamite, and the indie horror darling *The Lot* for Bad Idea.

She is the lead writer of *Ark: The Animated Serie*s from Studio Wildcard.

Giuseppe Cafaro is an Italian artist who is based in Caserta, Italy. He started his professional career with the Italian publisher GGStudio, and right after, in 2012, he started to work for Aspen Comics on books like *Soulfire, Fathom: Kiani* and *Trish out of Water*, and Zenescope Entertainment as a cover artist for several years.

He worked over the last 10 years with other publishers, like DC Comics, on *Suicide Squad* and *Catwoman*, and Dynamite Entertainment, on *Red Sonja* and *Vampirella*. He also worked on graphic novels for Boom Studios based on the *Power Rangers* franchise.

In 2021, he collaborated with Tim Seeley and Steve Orlando on *LOADED BIBLE* for Image Comics. Also, he worked on some short stories for Heavy Metal with Blake Northcott and with Phil Smith for the book *Brik Jones: Attorney for Earth*, for his publisher Fighting Lion Comics.

Arif Prianto followed his dreams of working in comics and began his career as a professional colorist in 2007. Since then he has worked on titles from Top Cow Productions, Inc on *WITCHBLADE, THE DARKNESS*, for DC on *Batman & The Joker, Dark Knights of Steel,* and for Marvel on *Venom* and *Spider Woman*. He says that coloring comics is "the best job ever!"

Troy Peteri has lettered everything from *The Avengers, Iron Man, Wolverine, Amazing Spider-Man* and *X-Men* to more recent titles such as *WITCHBLADE, CYBERFORCE,* and *Batman/Wonder Woman: The Brave & The Bold*. He can be reached at studio@alargerworld.com for your lettering and design needs. (Hooray, commerce!)

A Few Words...

The only guarantee in life is that there are no guarantees. This little nugget is especially true when it comes to the creative process. In fact, the odds of creating something that truly resonates with an audience makes a trip to Vegas seem like a sound financial investment. But every once in a while, that slot machine lever gets pulled, and…Jackpot. Sure enough, 29 years ago, Brian Haberlin, David Wohl, Michael Turner, and myself took a metaphorical trip to Vegas and hit the creative jackpot. Sara Pezzini and The Witchblade were born and thanks to all of you, lit the comic world on fire. That fire burned so bright it ignited an independent comic into a live-action television show, an anime, and a slew of statues, toys, and cool collectibles.

Fast forward to the book you now hold in your hands.

From the get-go, Sara Pezzini was a character so new, living in a world so ripe with possibilities, that scores of comics' best and brightest wanted to tell her story. And wow, did they ever. I mean, there was so much talent orbiting *Witchblade* that it almost felt like an embarrassment of writing and drawing riches! And I'm beyond grateful for all the incredible stories they told. But the world has gone through some seismic changes in the years since Sara first hit the shelves, and we at Top Cow have been planning for some time to bring her back with a new start and a fresh voice.

The list of writers we felt could supply this new voice that we were looking for was short. On top of that list was a talented writer named Marguerite Bennett. In a very handy twist of fate, Marguerite and I were attending the same comic convention and found ourselves sharing a car that was shuttling us from the airport to our hotel. Not one to pass up a free gift from the universe, I plopped myself in the seat next to her, introduced myself, and gave her the five-minute pitch for our *Witchblade* relaunch. Happily, the universe was not done smiling down upon me. Turns out Marguerite grew up reading *Witchblade* and was a huge fan of the character. The deal was done before we hit the freeway.

Now since comics are made up of words and pictures, we obviously needed great art to go with Marguerite's great writing. Enter the amazing Giuseppe Cafaro. The brass ring in comics is pairing a writer and an artist that gel and complement each other. Marguerite and Giuseppe are that brass ring. It's also no secret that I'm a big believer in the power of color, as it helps set the tone as well as adding depth and nuance to comic art. We were all thrilled when Arif Prianto signed on as colorist for *Witchblade* because, quite simply, he's one of the best there is. And since we're in the words and pictures business, there's no one better to letter those words and put them in balloons than the incredible Troy Peteri!

The other critical component for putting together a great comic is a crack team working in tandem behind the scenes. I can't think of a better group of comic professionals than Elena Salcedo and Matt Hawkins for editorial, Phil Smith for production, and Lisa Wu for marketing. I thank them for their invaluable input, hard work, long hours, and dedication into making the *Witchblade* relaunch happen. You all are the best! I also want to thank Eric Stephenson, Alex Cox and Kat Salazar over at Image Comics for going above and beyond and being such an integral part of the process. I also want to thank you, the fans, for your continued support and for making this incredible journey possible.

And finally, we wish to dedicate this book to the great Michael Turner, a man whose artistry and spirit set the bar for all that followed and whose life and talent were taken from us far too soon.

With gratitude,
Marc Silvestri

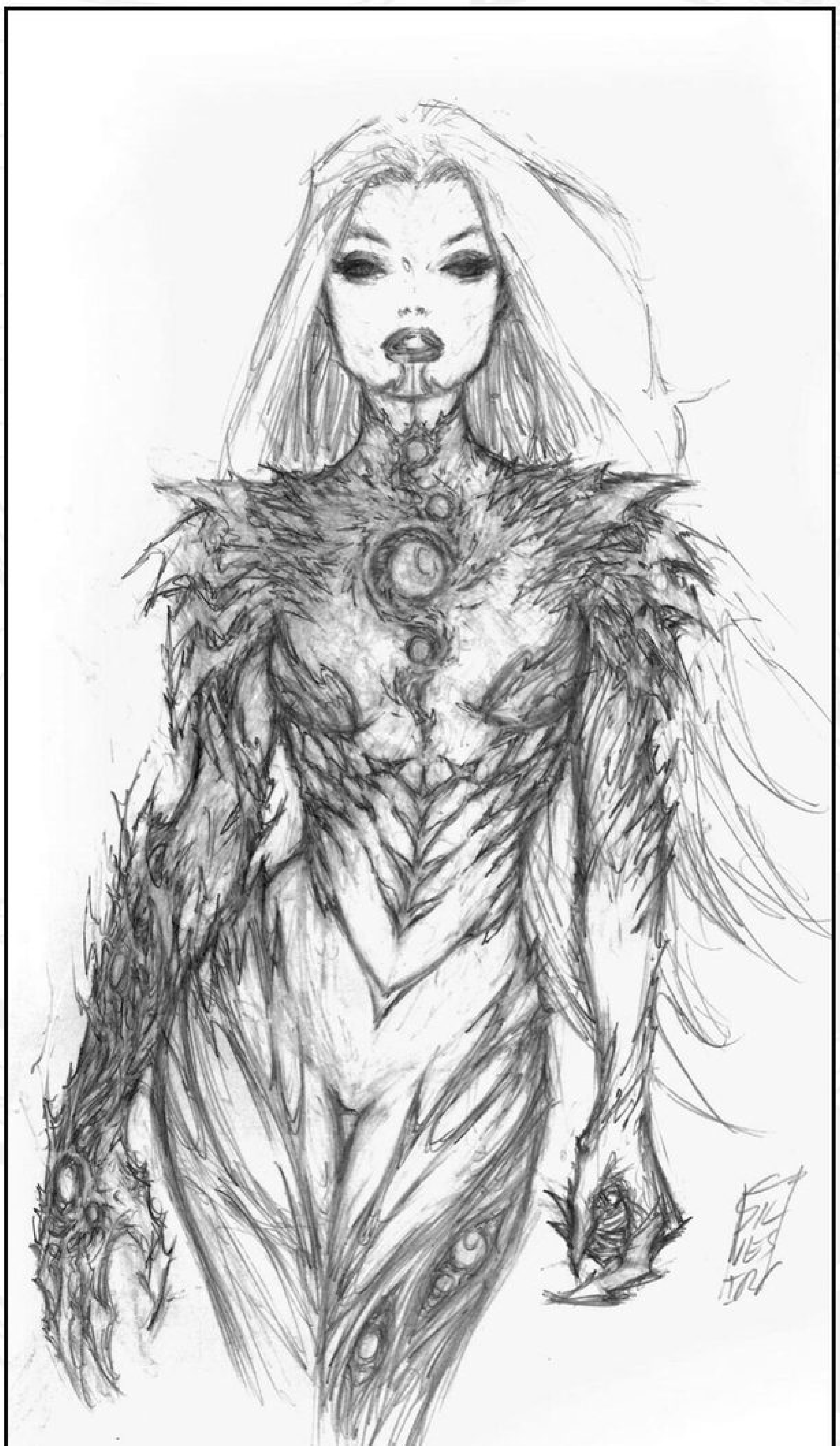
Dedicated to
MICHAEL TURNER

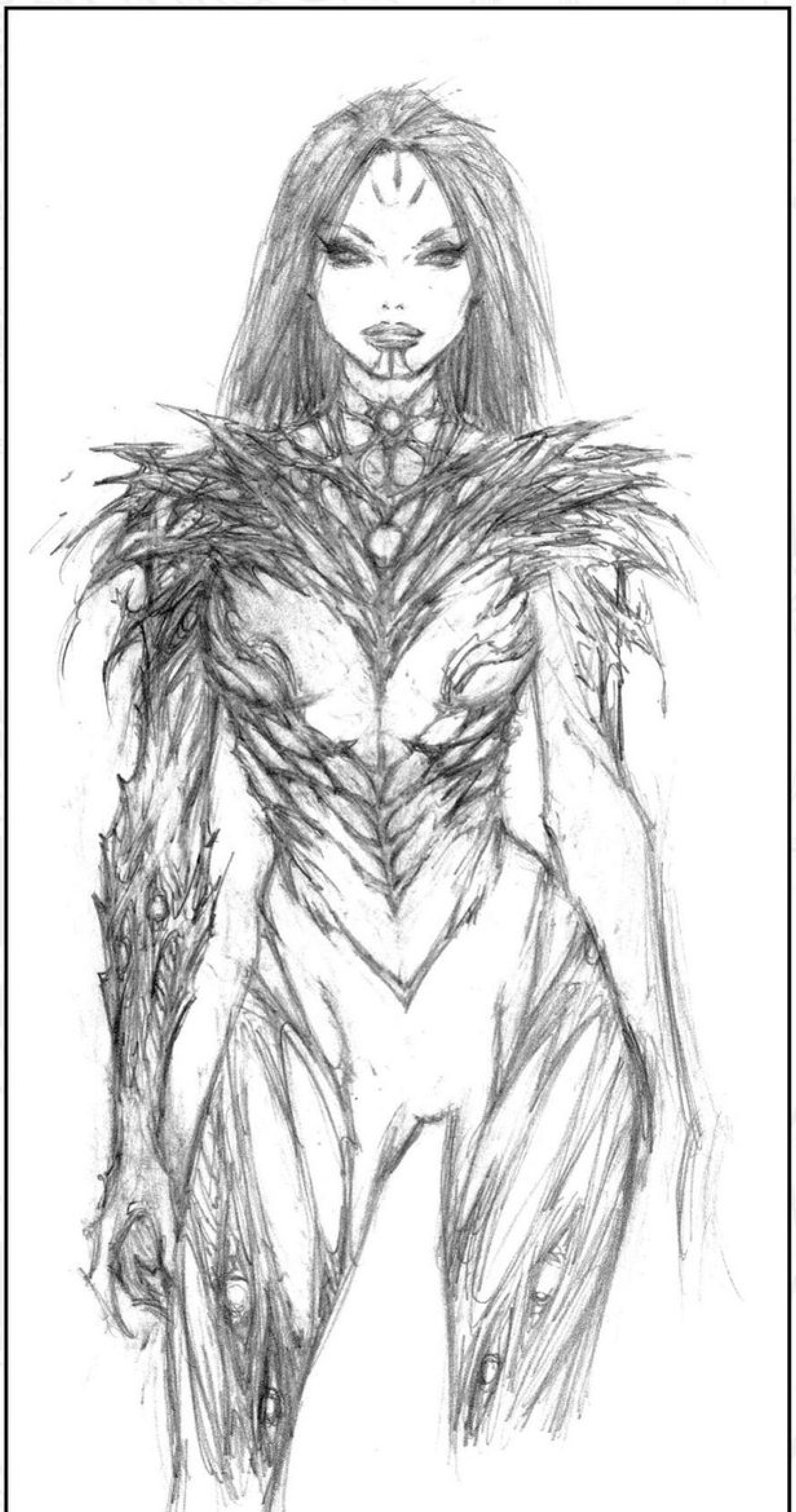
WITCHBLADE®

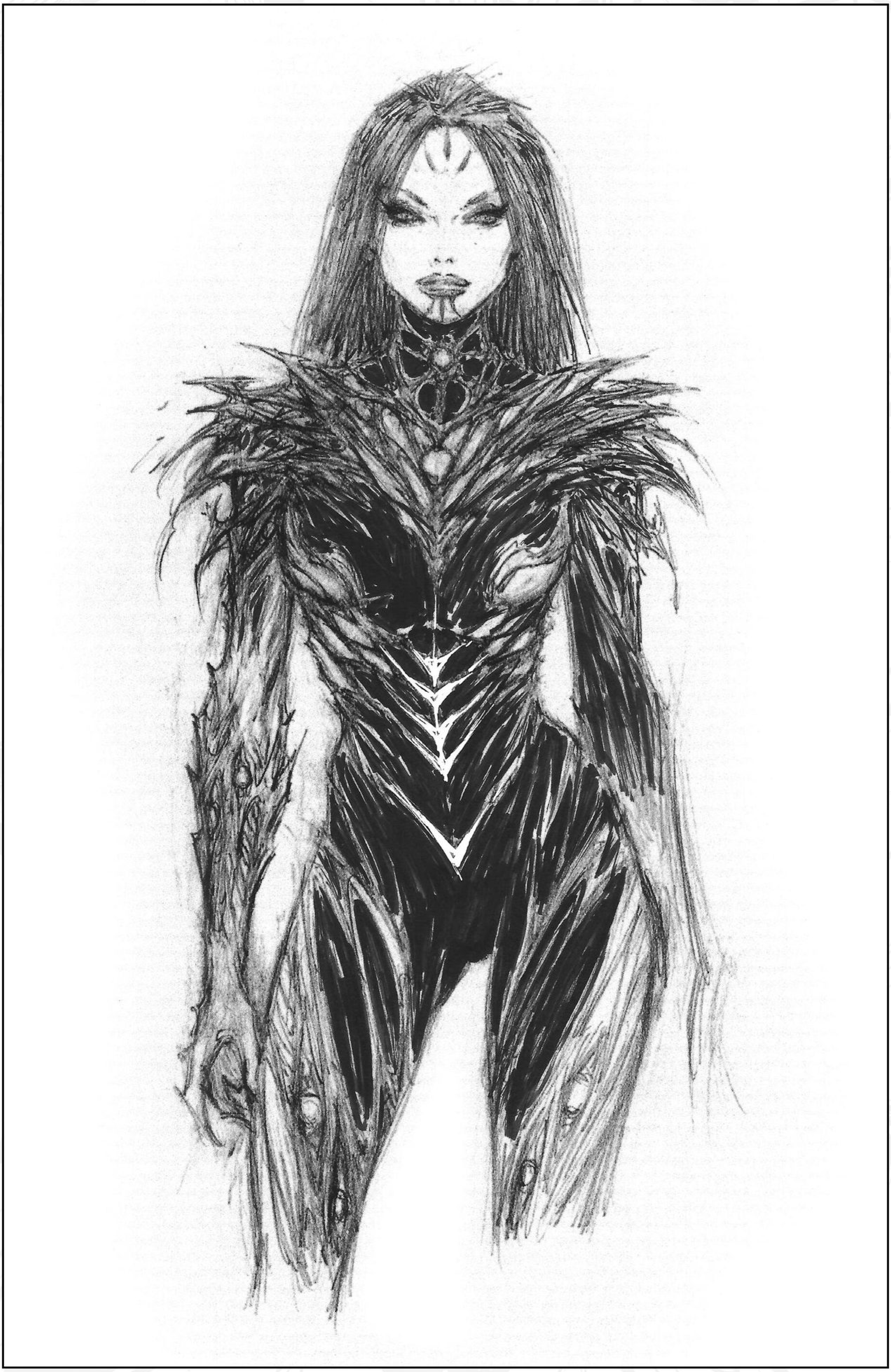
Process Gallery

On the following pages, get a look at the process behind characters, pages and covers that are a part of the return of Witchblade!

Character Designs
by **Marc Silvestri**

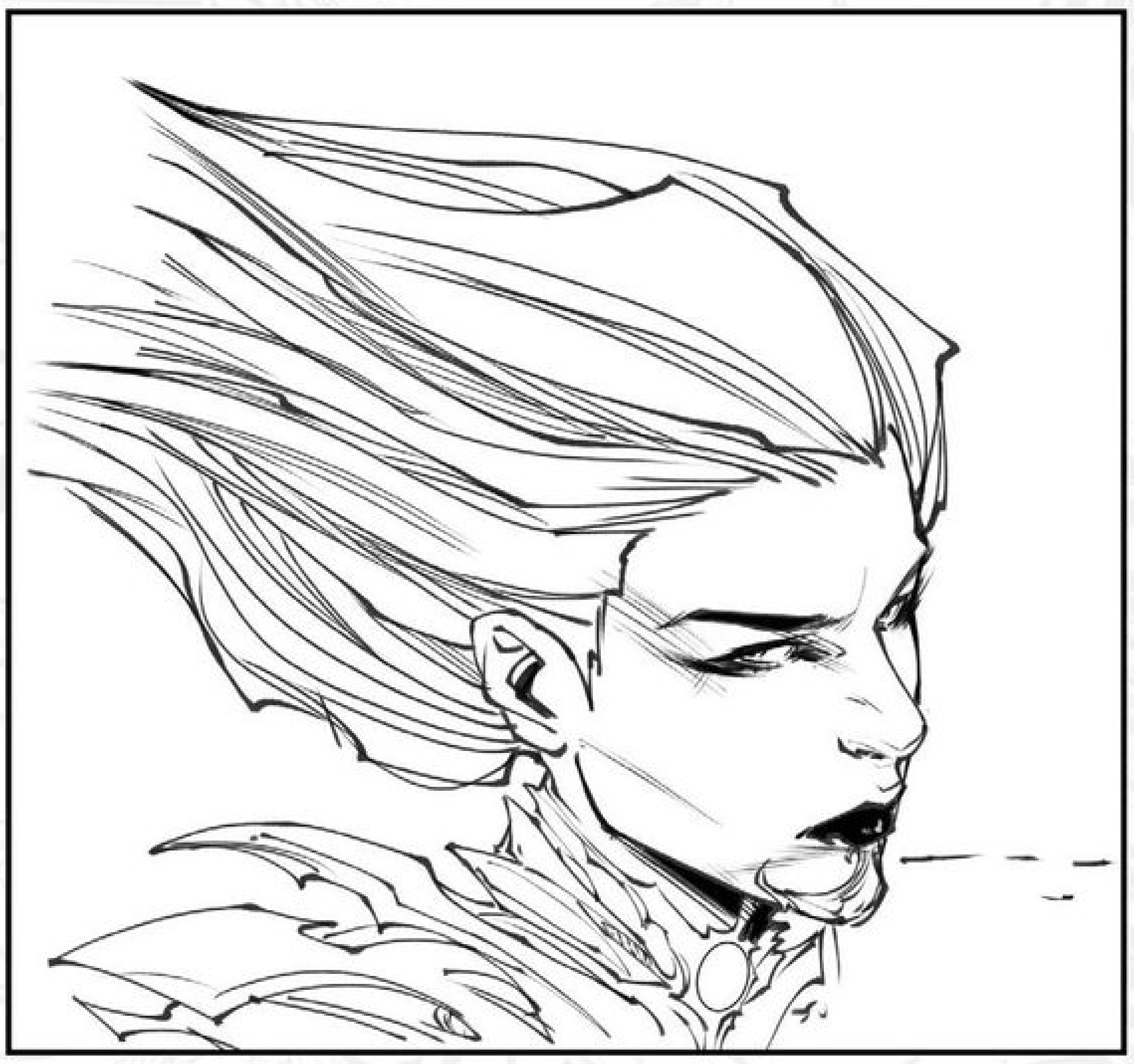


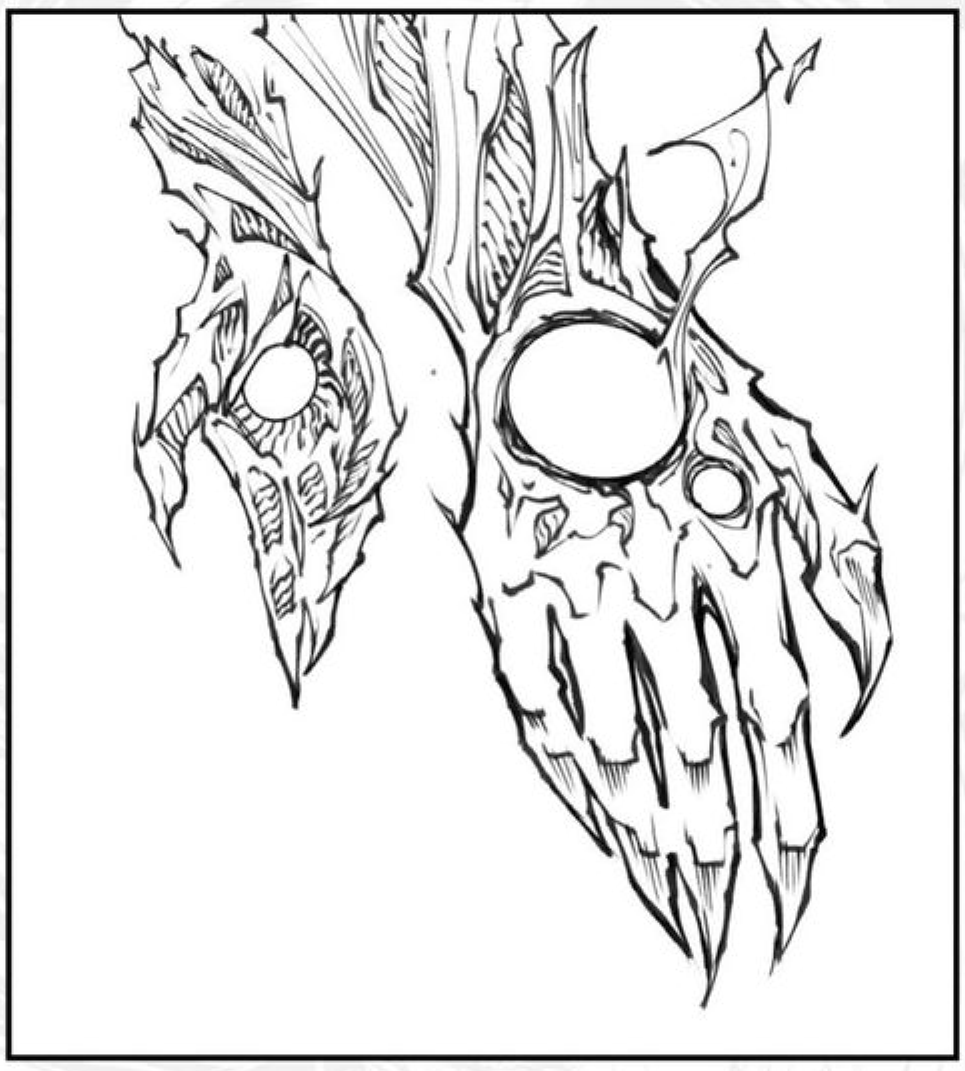


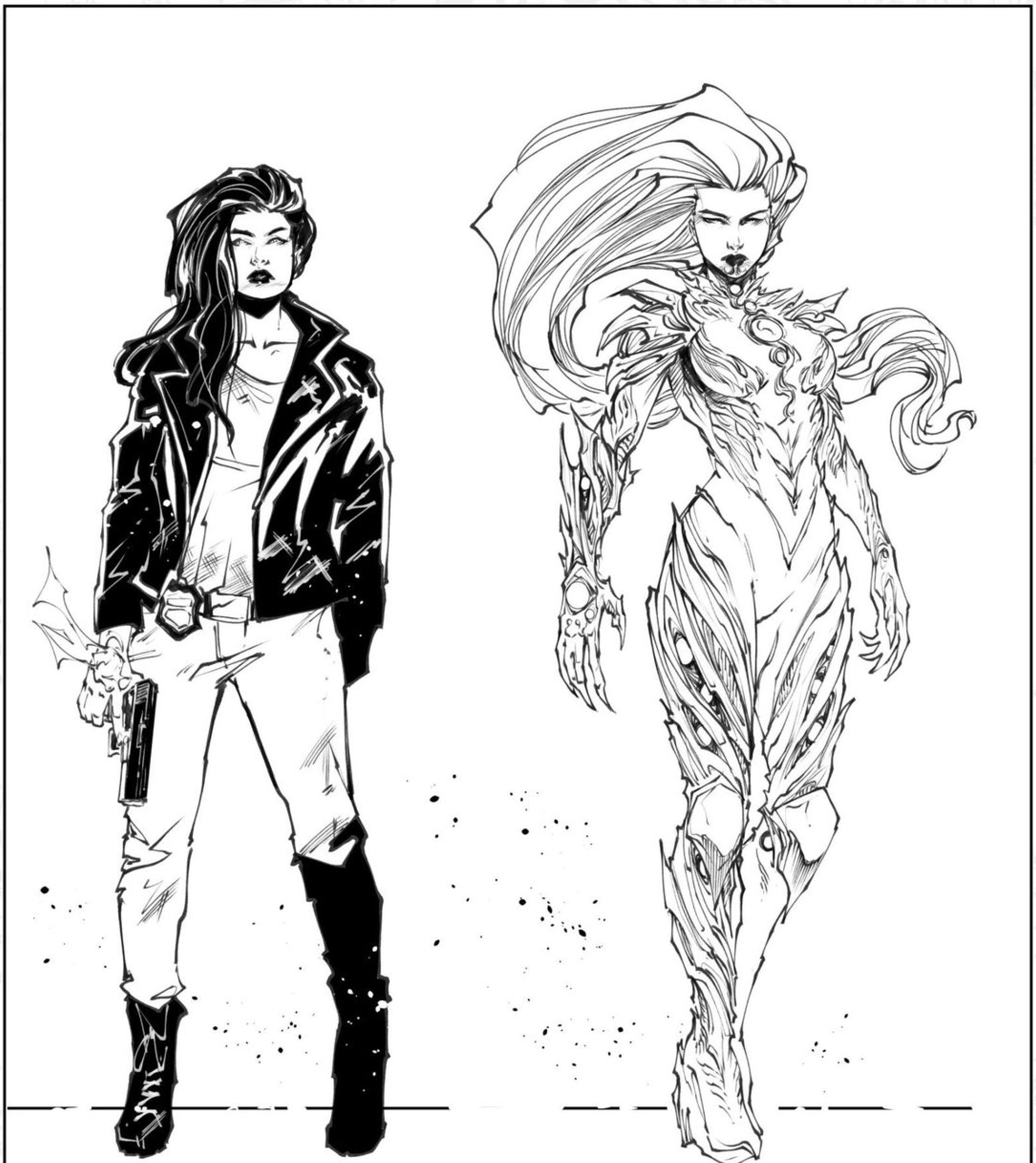


Early Witchblade armor redesign sketches by **Marc Silvestri**

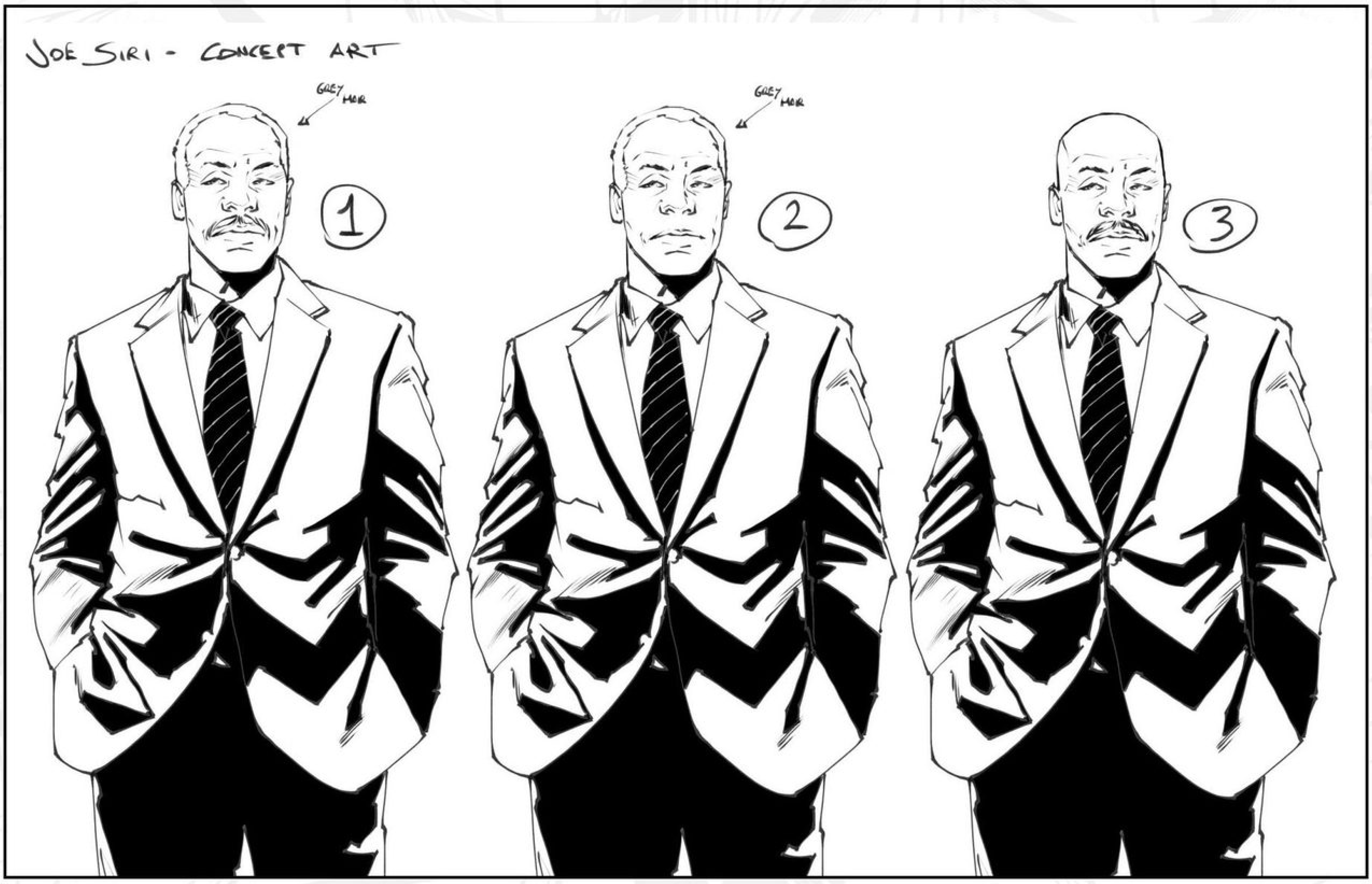
Character Designs by **Giuseppe Cafaro**



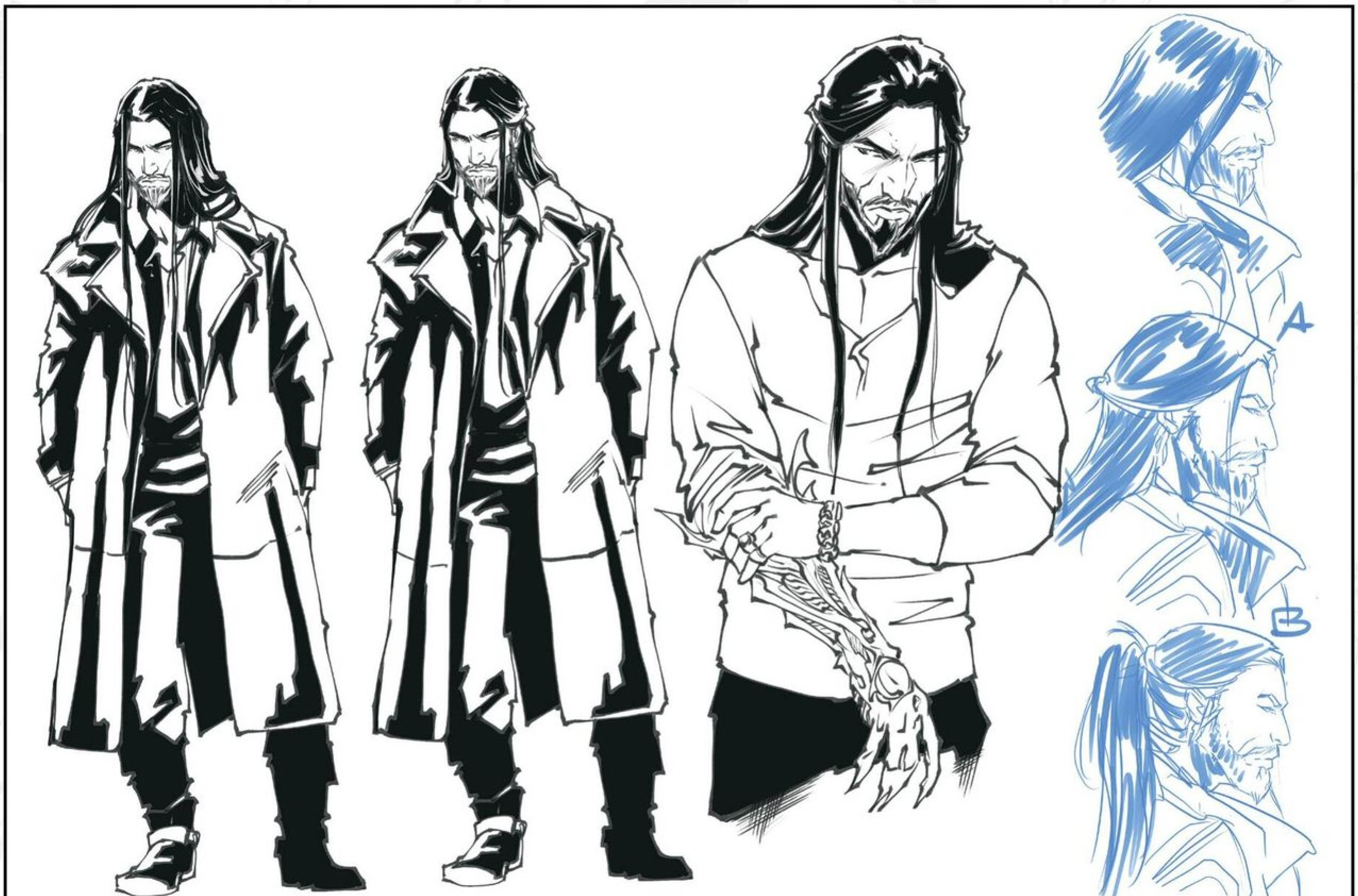




Early Sara designs based on armor redesign by **Marc Silvestri**


JOE SIRI - CONCEPT ART
GREY HAIR
GREY HAIR
1
2
3

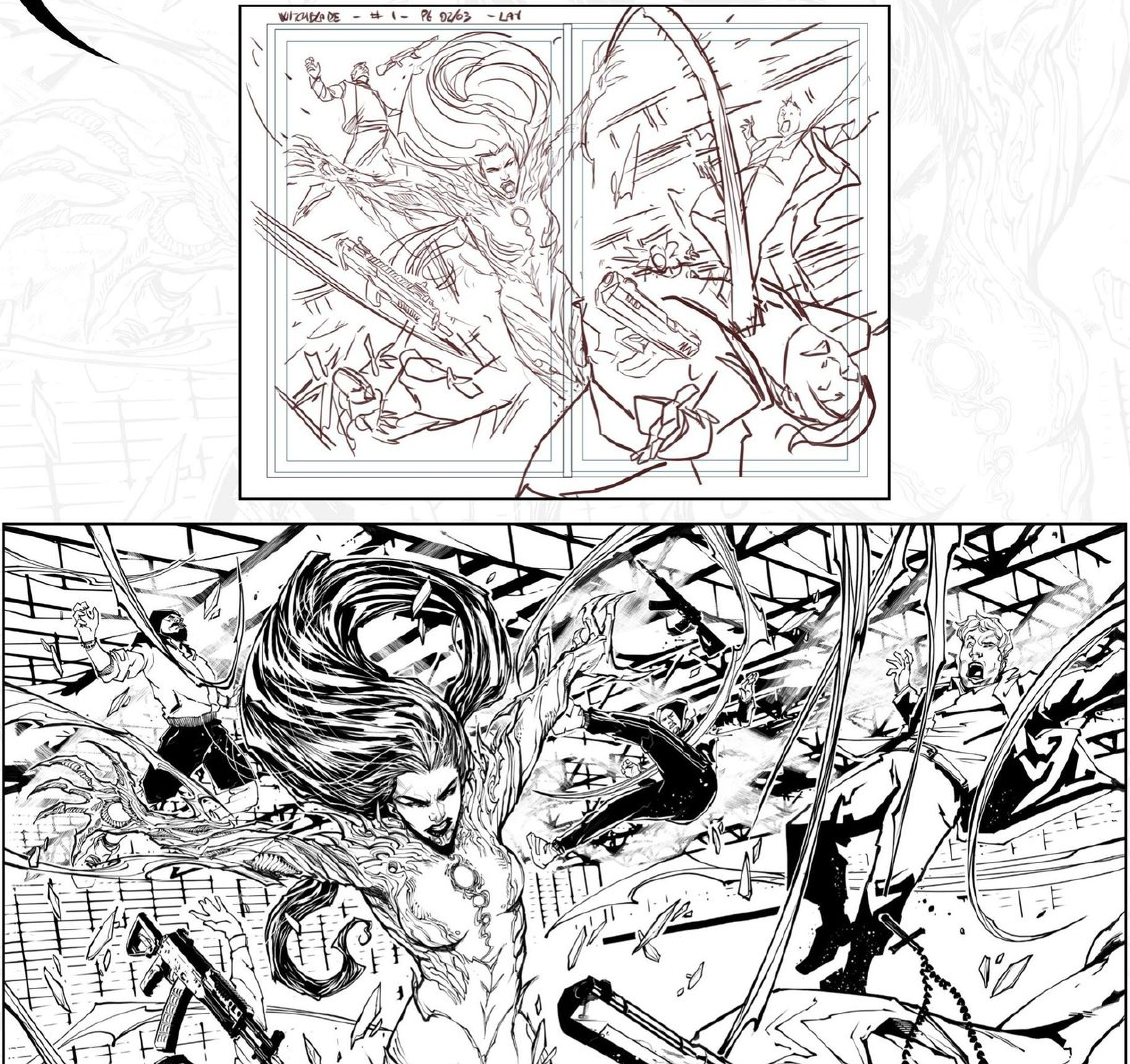
Redesign of Captain Joe Siri for next issue



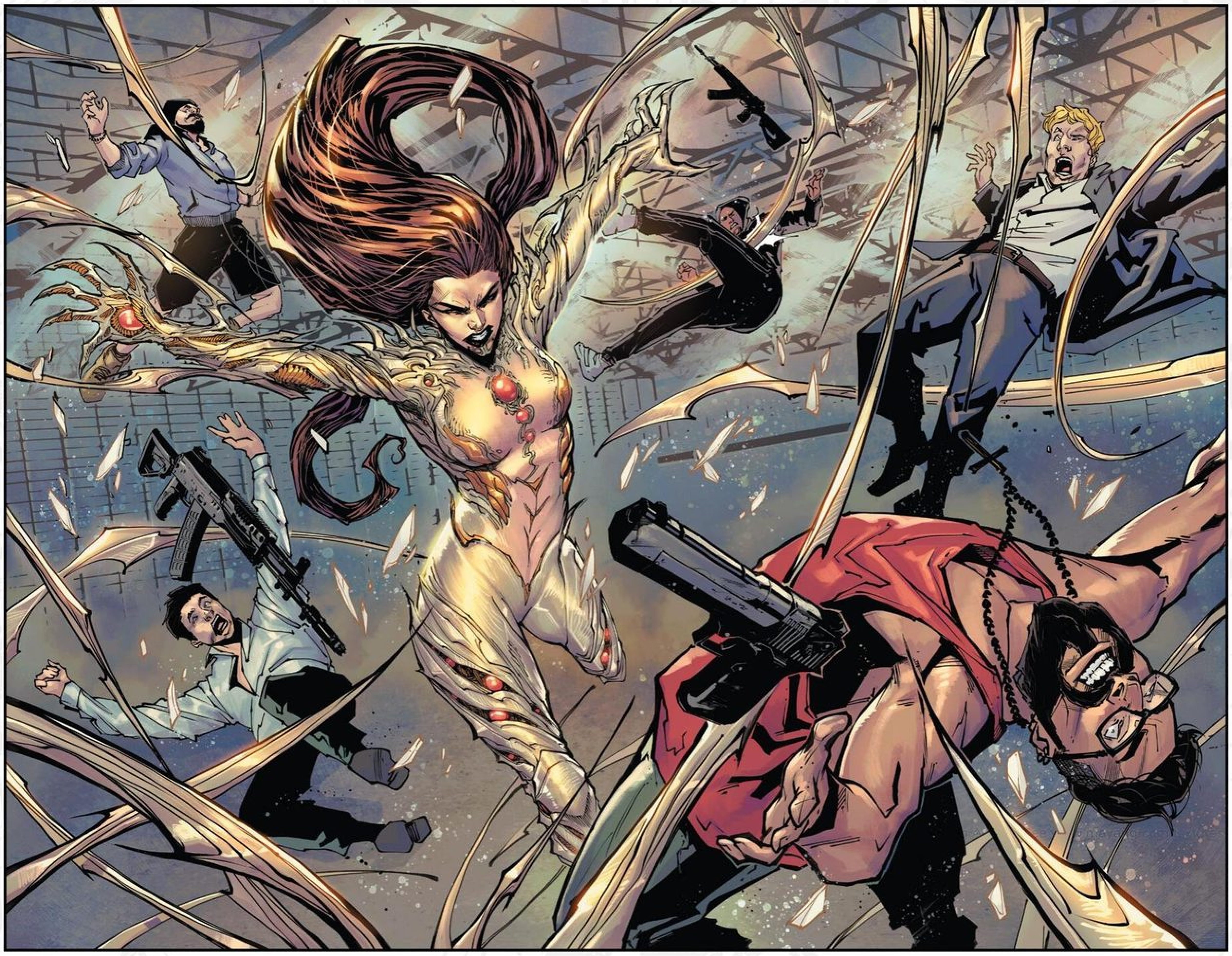
Redesign options for Ian Nottingham

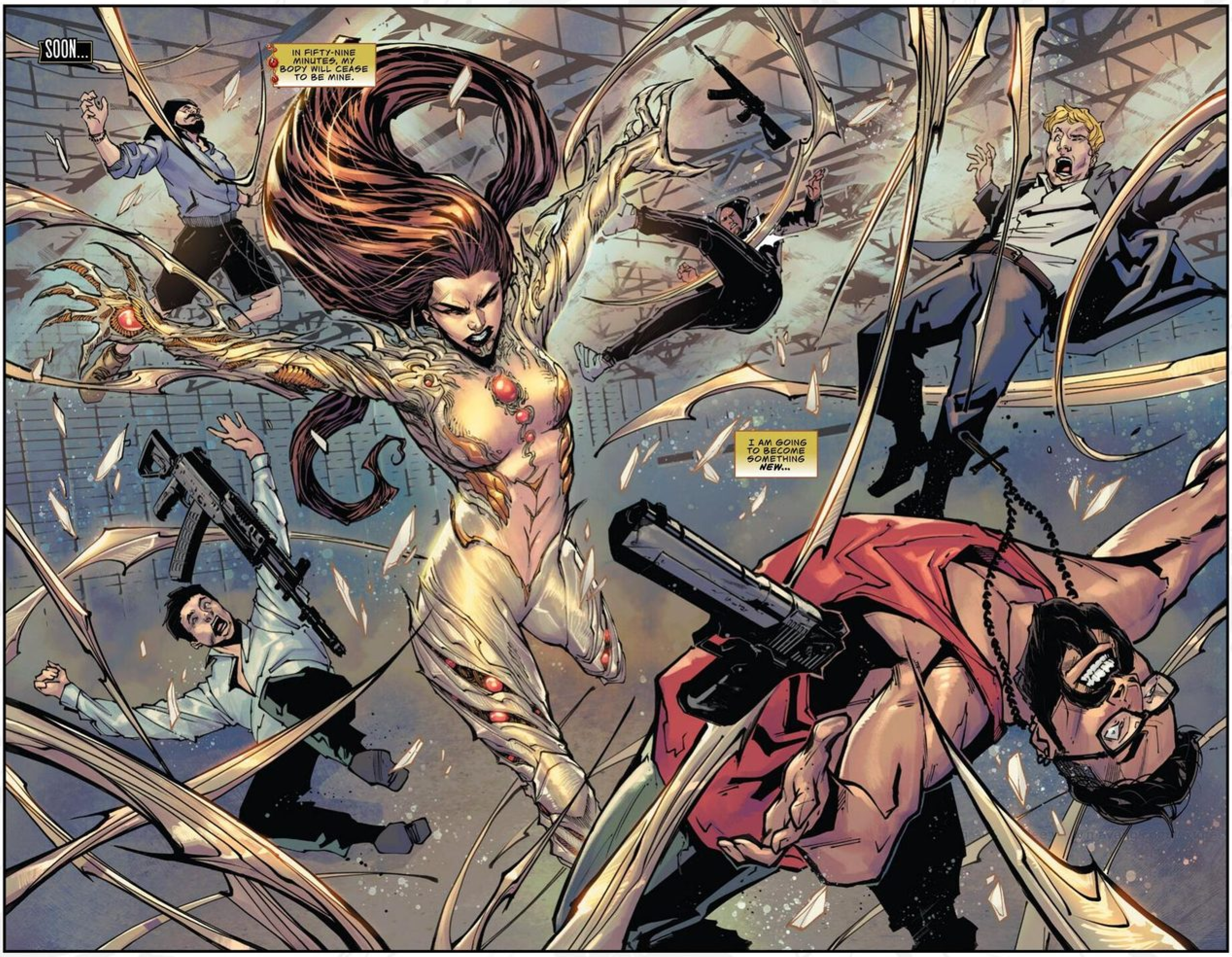
WITCHBLADE®

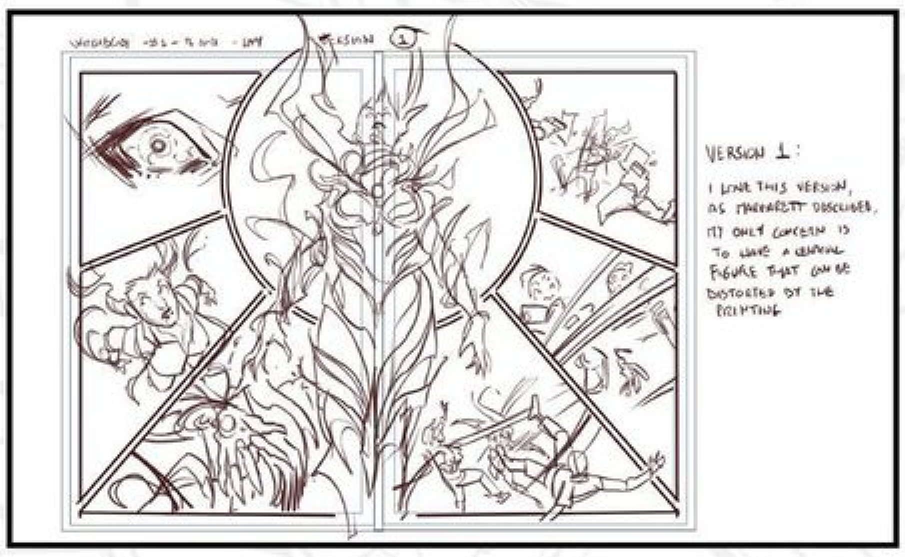
Page Process Gallery

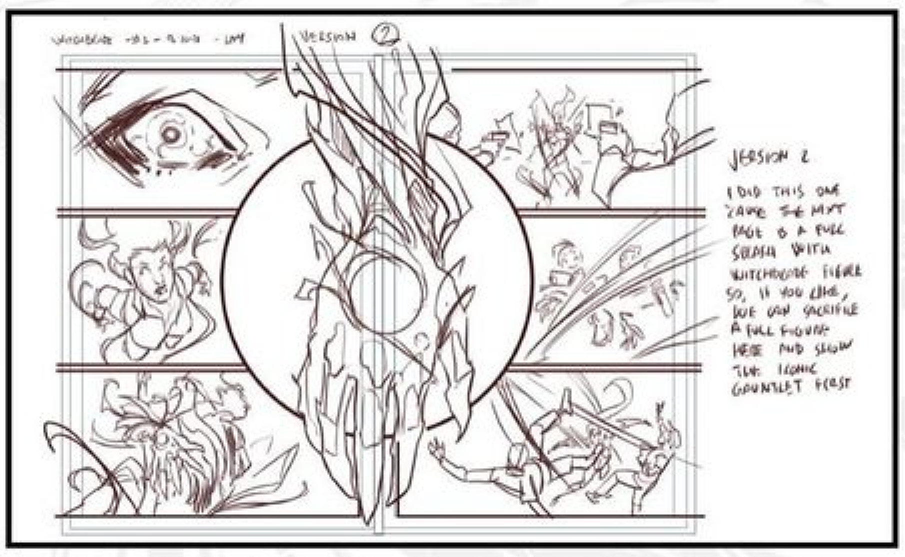

WITCHBLADE - #1 - PG 02/03 - LAY

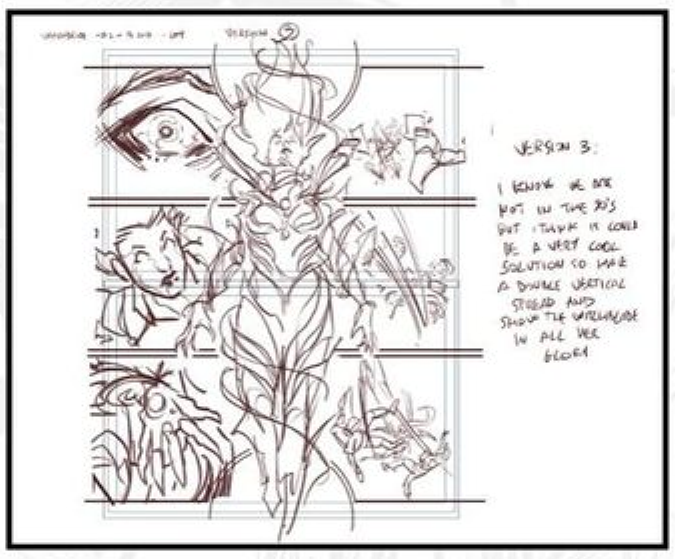
Witchblade #1, pages 2-3, process from thumbnails, line art, colors to letters

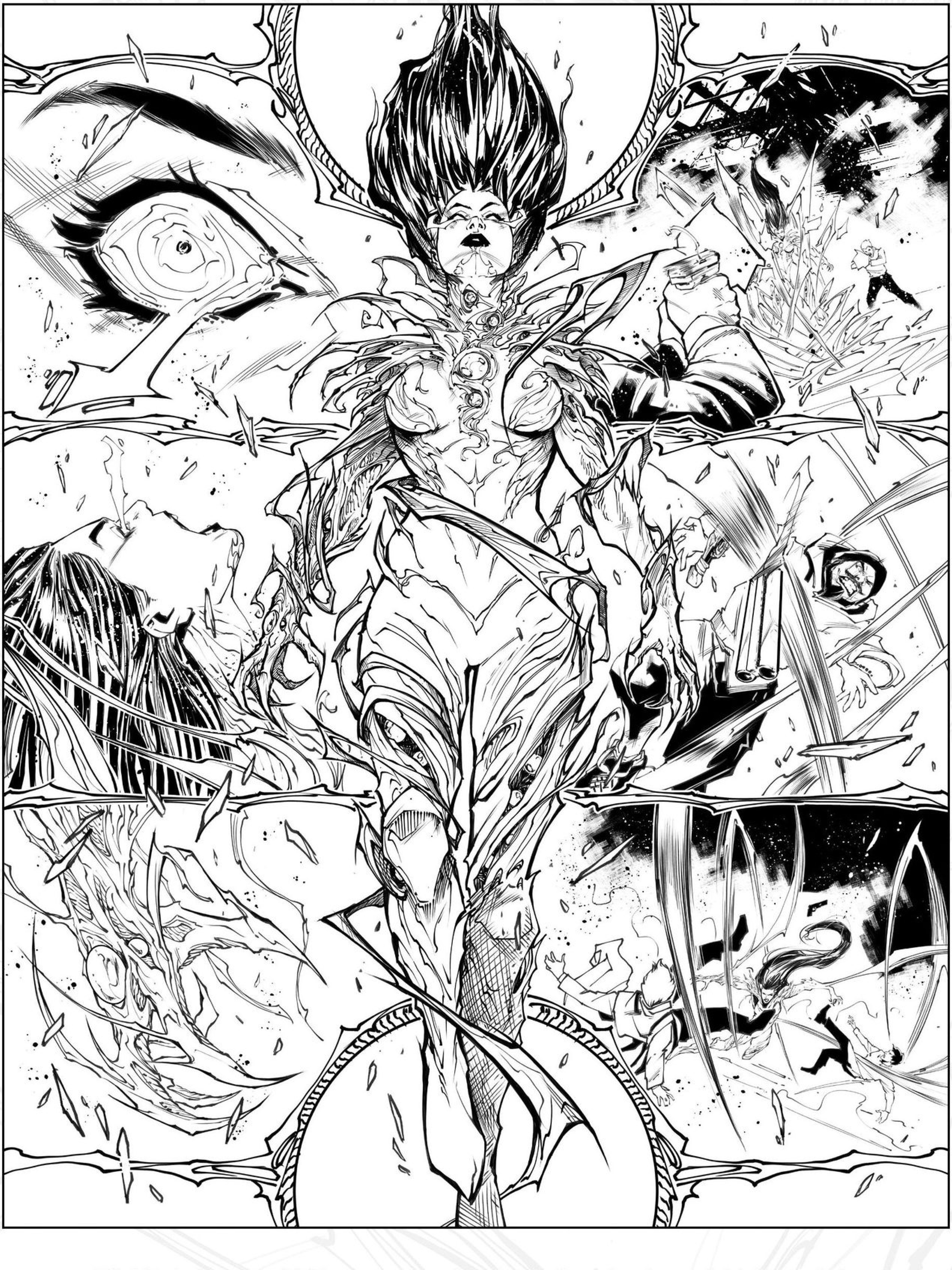



SOON...
IN FIFTY-NINE MINUTES, MY BODY WILL CEASE TO BE MINE.
I AM GOING TO BECOME SOMETHING *NEW*...

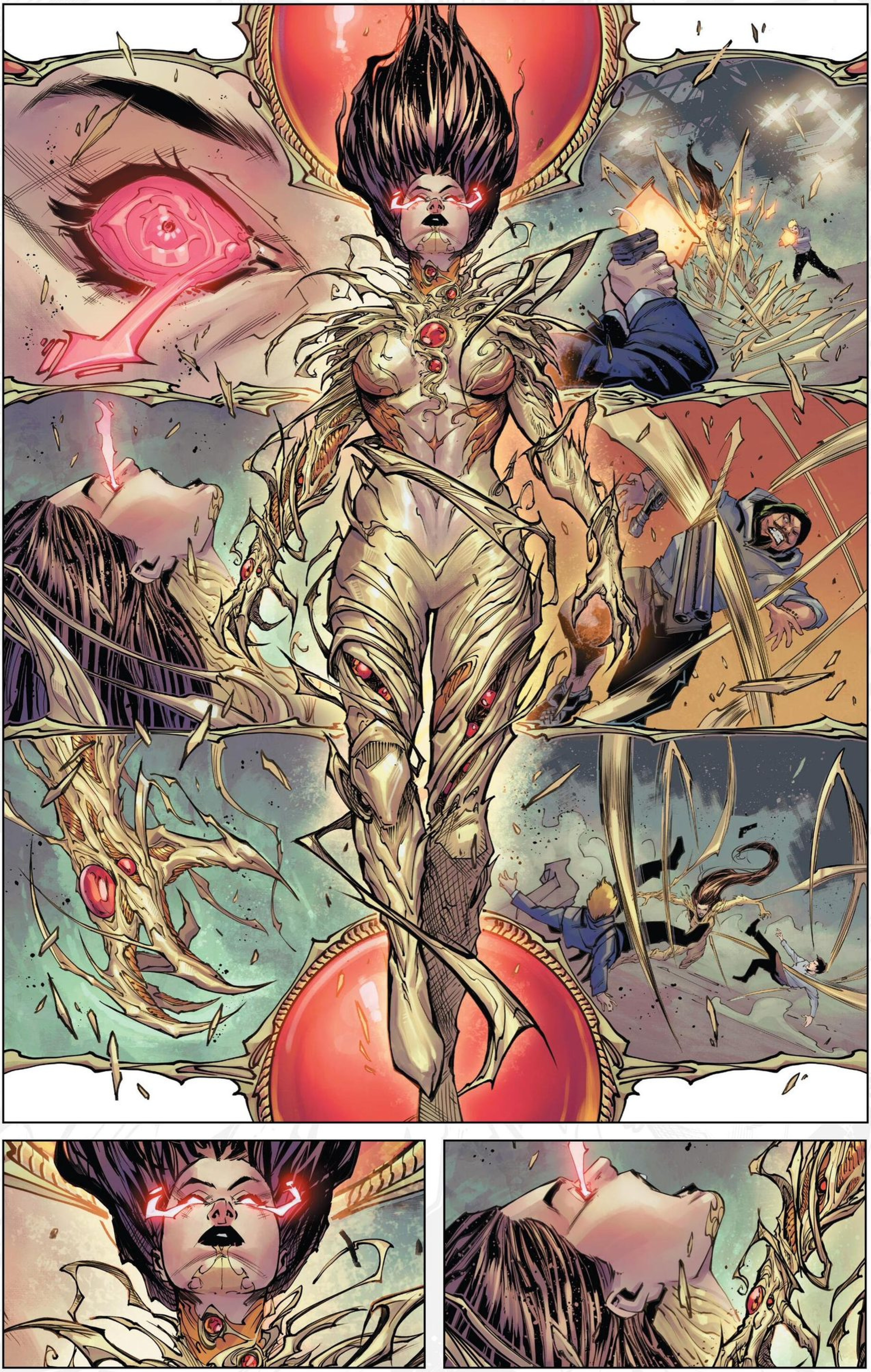

VERSION 1
VERSION 1:
I LOVE THIS VERSION, AS MARGARETT DESCRIBED, MY ONLY CONCERN IS TO HAVE A CENTRAL FIGURE THAT CAN BE DISTORTED BY THE PRINTING


VERSION 2
VERSION 2
I DID THIS ONE 'CAUSE THE NEXT PAGE IS A FULL SPLASH WITH WITCHBLADE FIGURE SO, IF YOU LIKE, WE CAN SACRIFICE A FULL FIGURE HERE AND SHOW THE ICONIC GAUNTLET FIRST

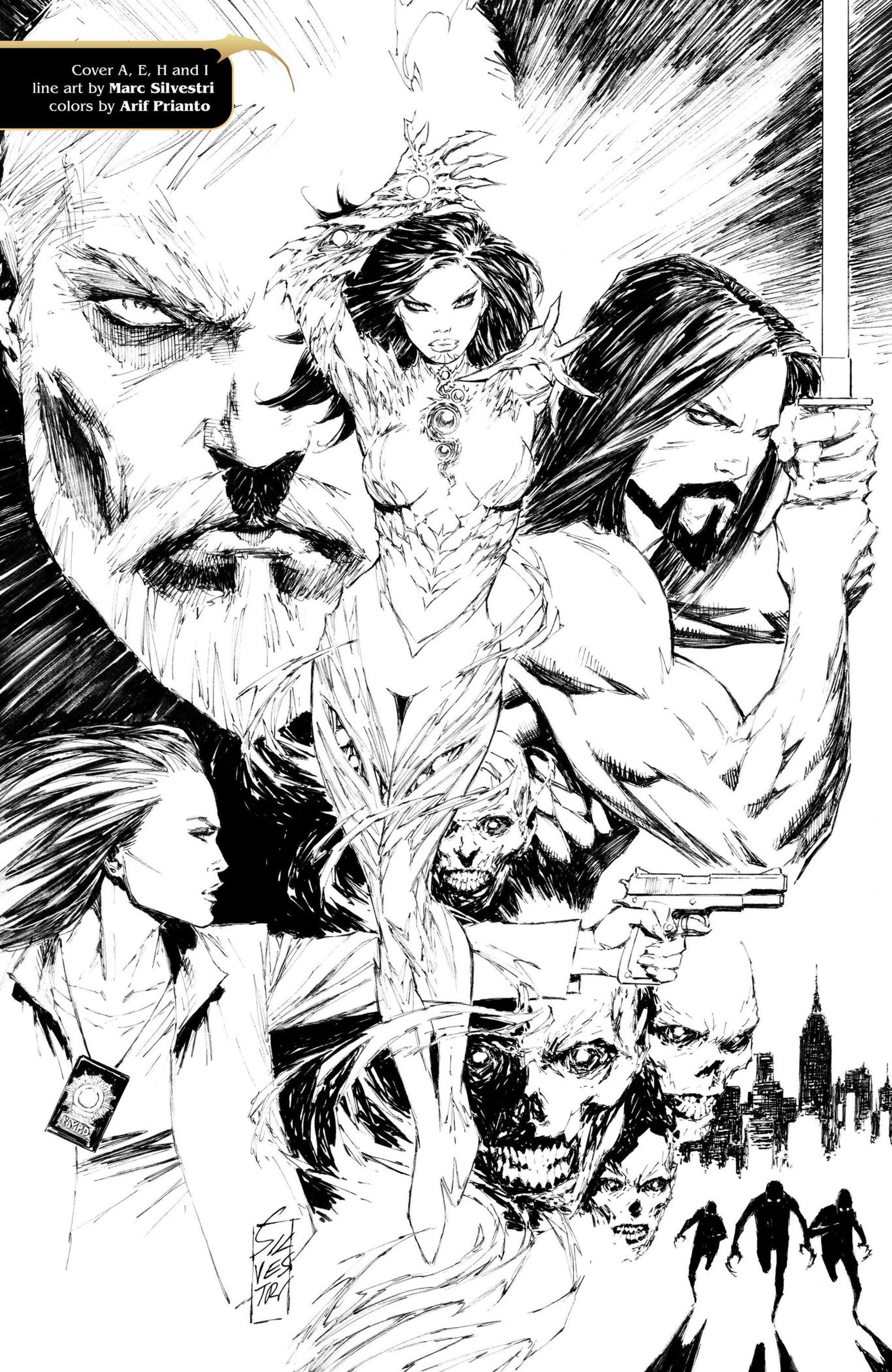

VERSION 3
VERSION 3:
I KNOW WE ARE NOT IN THE 90'S BUT I THINK IT COULD BE A VERY COOL SOLUTION TO HAVE A DOUBLE VERTICAL SPREAD AND SHOW THE WITCHBLADE IN ALL HER GLORY



Witchblade #1, pages 20-21, process from thumbnails, line art, colors and detail snapshots

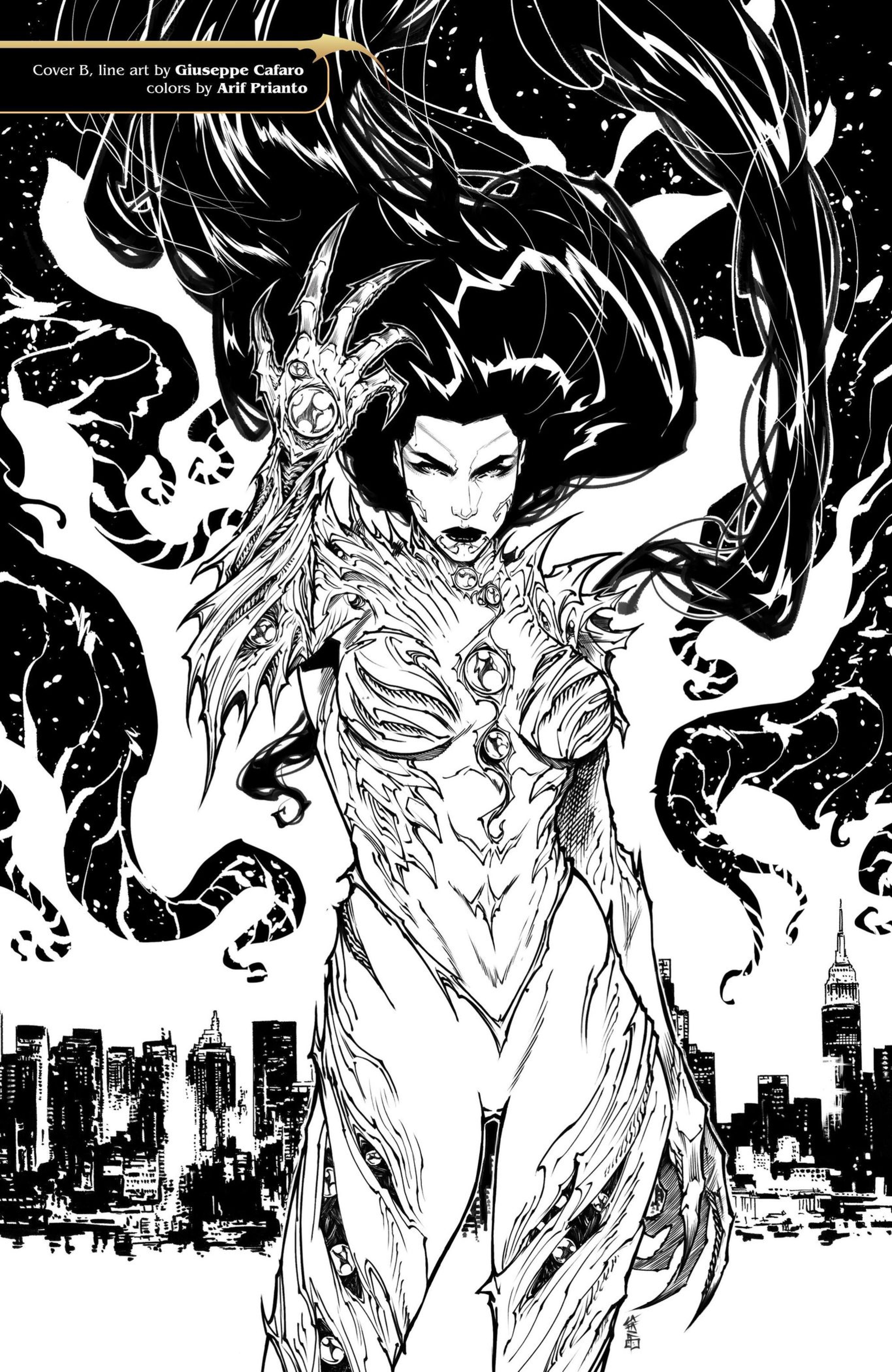


Cover A, E, H and I
line art by **Marc Silvestri**
colors by **Arif Prianto**

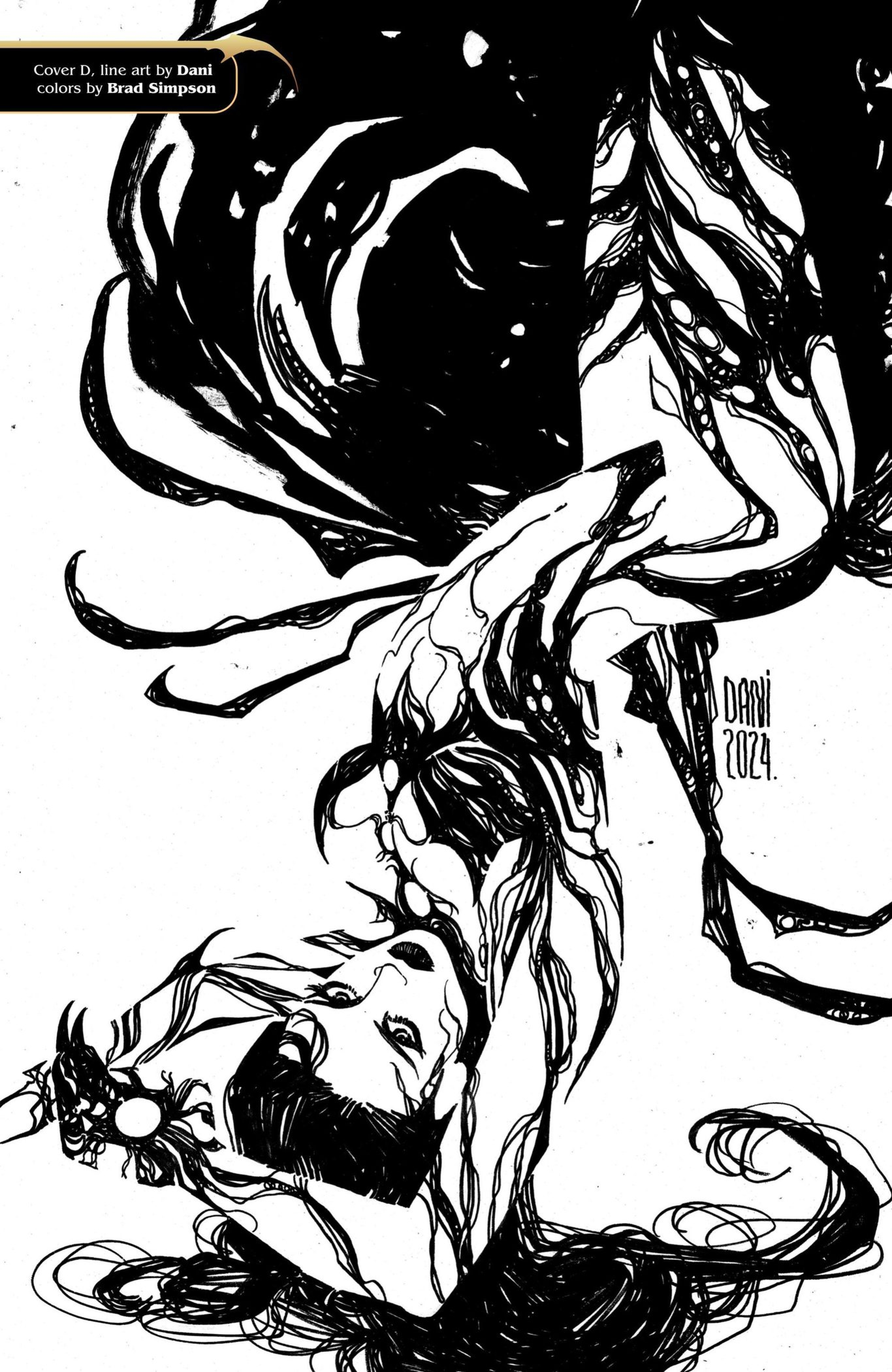


NYPD
SILVESTRI
+arf

Cover B, line art by **Giuseppe Cafaro**
colors by **Arif Prianto**

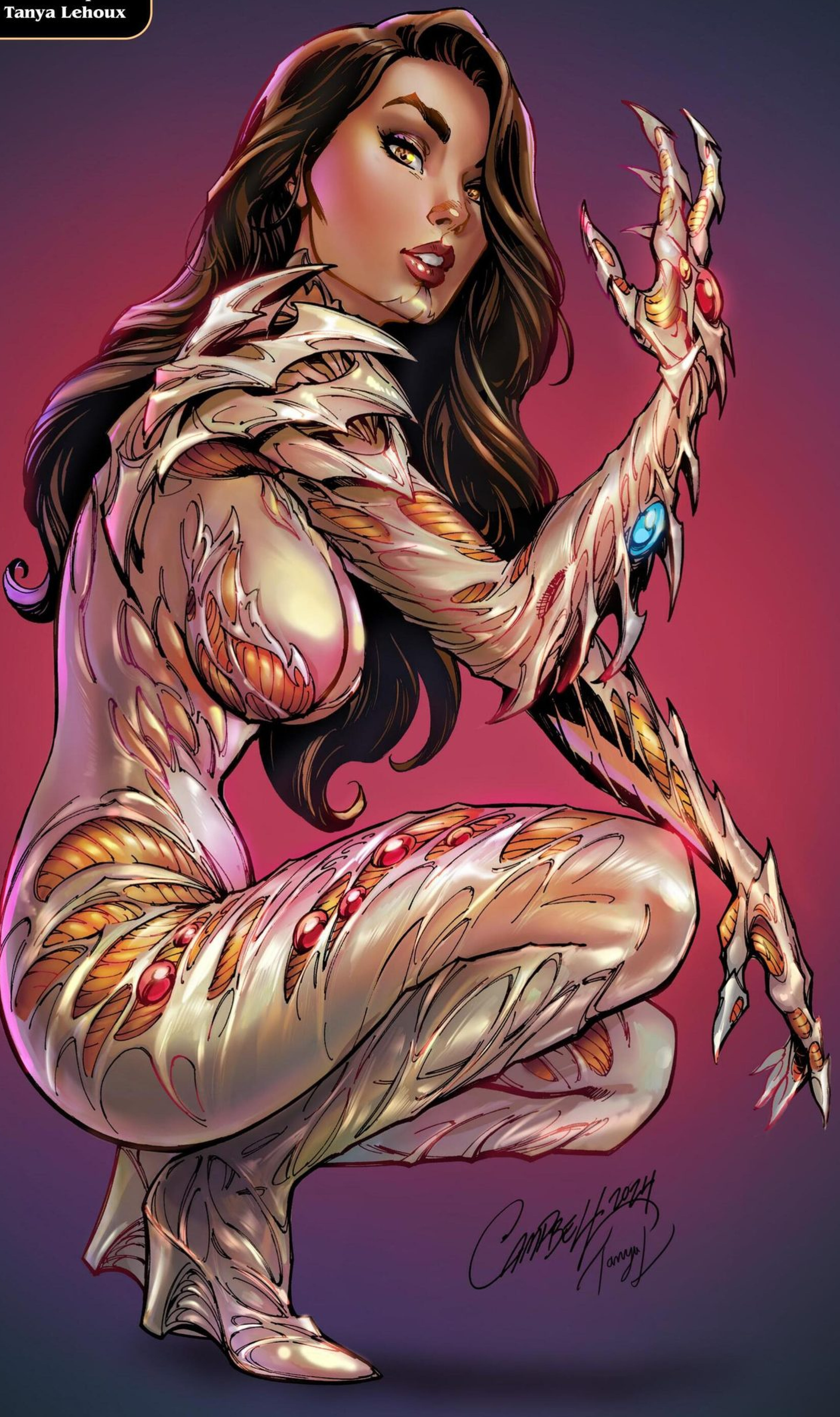


Cover D, line art by **Dani**
colors by **Brad Simpson**

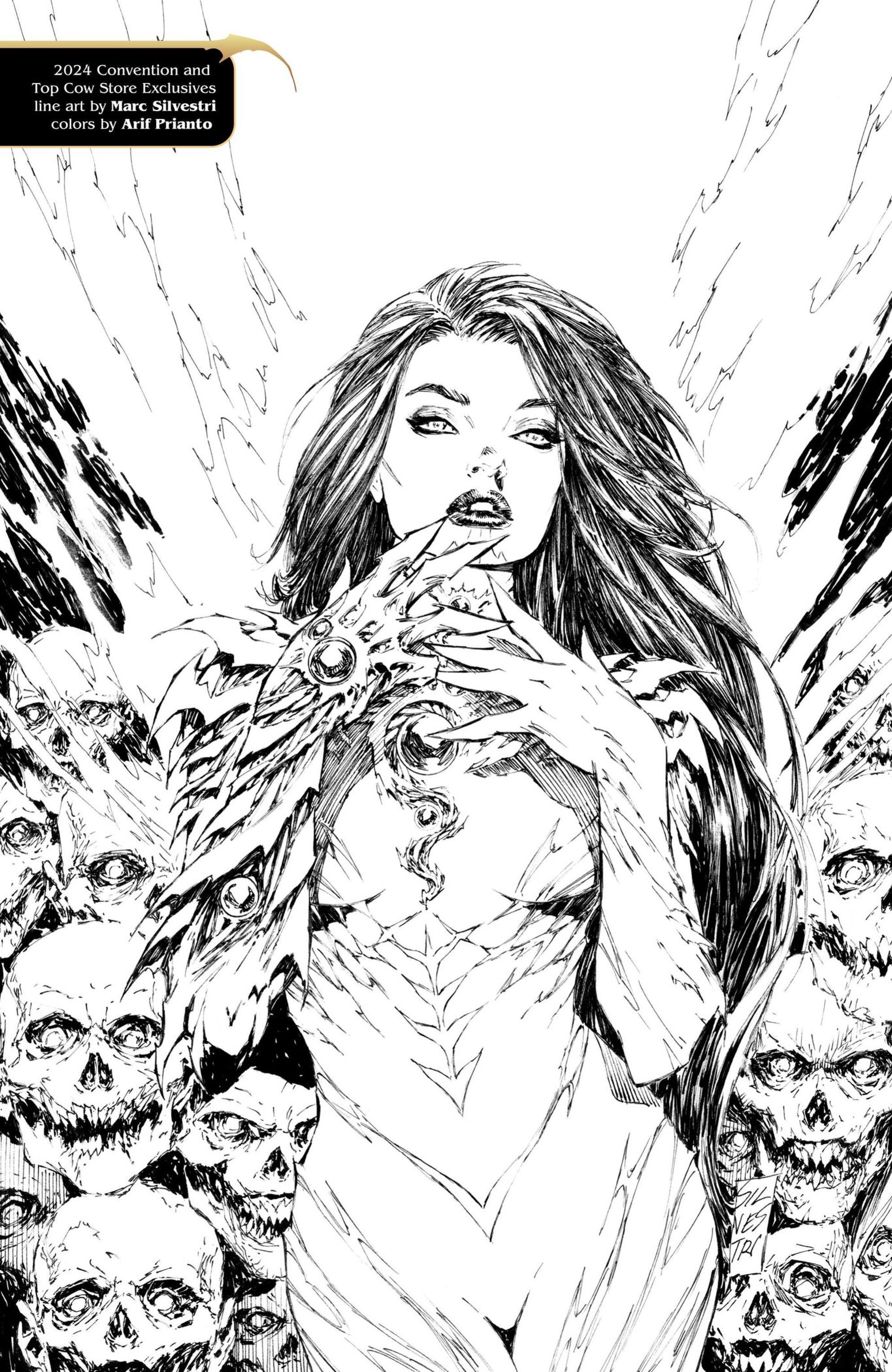


DANI
2024.

Cover F,
by **J. Scott Campbell**
and **Tanya Lehoux**


Campbell 2024
Tanya L

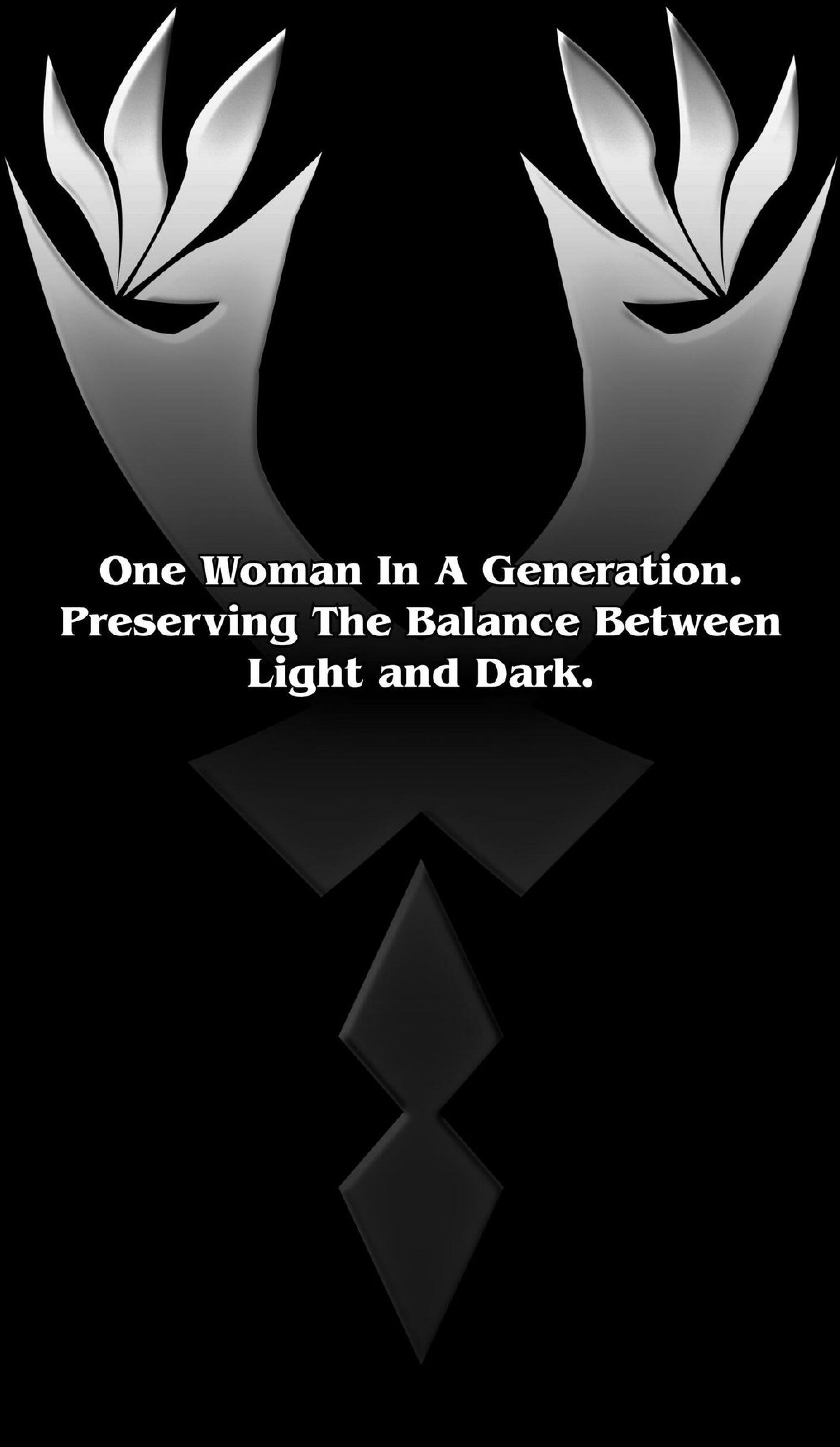
Cover G,
by **Bill Sienkiewicz**



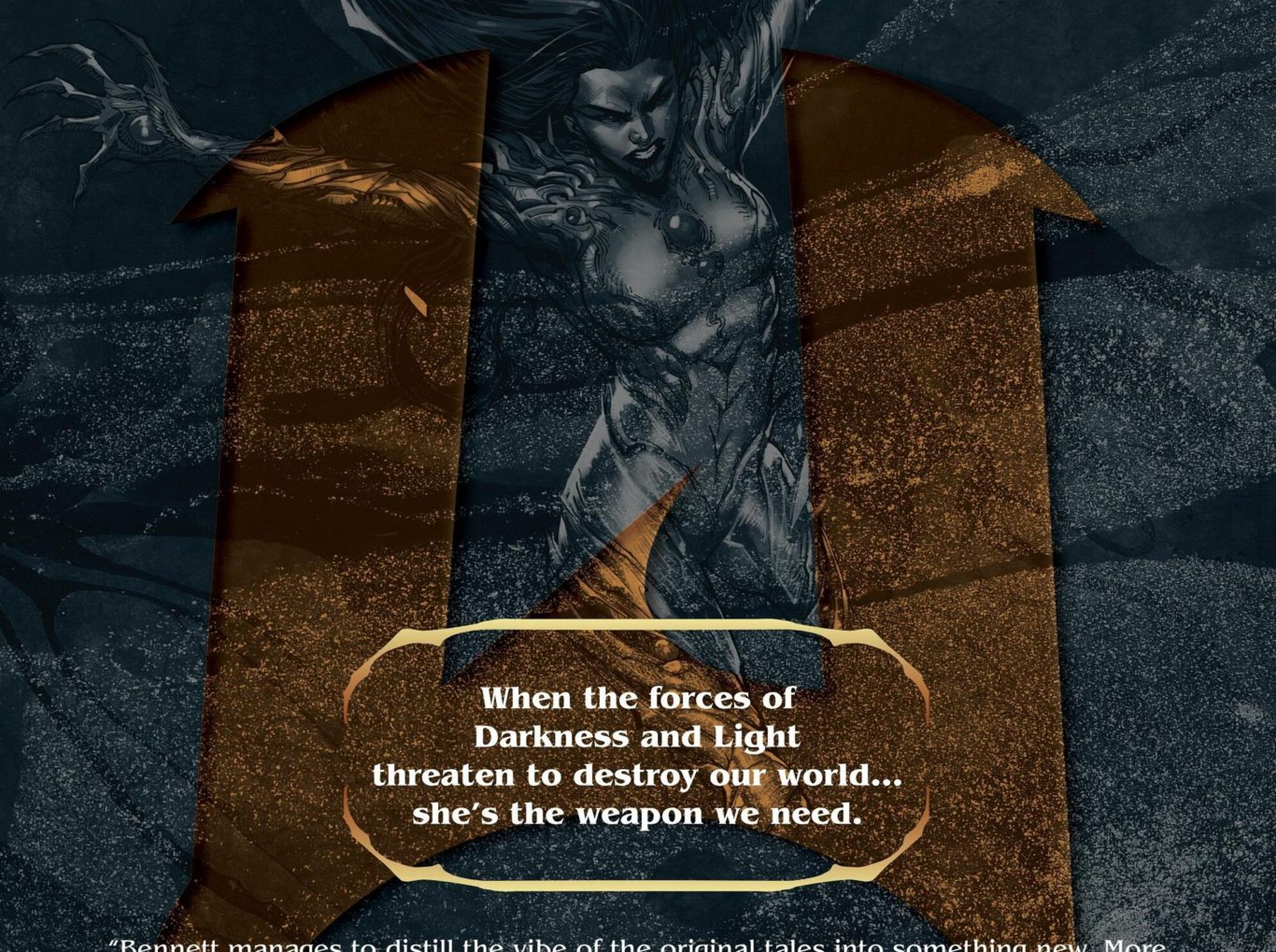
2024 Convention and
Top Cow Store Exclusives
line art by **Marc Silvestri**
colors by **Arif Prianto**

SILVESTRI
arif

NEXT ISSUE: "FEELING GOOD"



One Woman In A Generation.
Preserving The Balance Between
Light and Dark.



When the forces of
Darkness and Light
threaten to destroy our world...
she's the weapon we need.

"Bennett manages to distill the vibe of the original tales into something new. More importantly though, she applies her greatest strength; strong dialogue and big feelings, to Sara Pezzini, one of the best characters to come out of Image and Top Cow."
– Tim Seeley *(LOCAL MAN, HACK/SLASH)*

"Bennett and Cafaro bring a roaring rampage of high-octane action with a lot to unpack under the hood."
– Al Ewing *(Immortal Hulk, Avengers Inc.)*
Recipient of GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Comic Book

"Visceral, powerful, compelling - and unstoppable."
– Ryan North *(Adventure Time, The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl)*
EISNER AWARD winner

"Hard-boiled supernatural noir hypercharged for the 21st century."
– Kieron Gillen *(Once & Future, DIE, PHONOGRAM)*

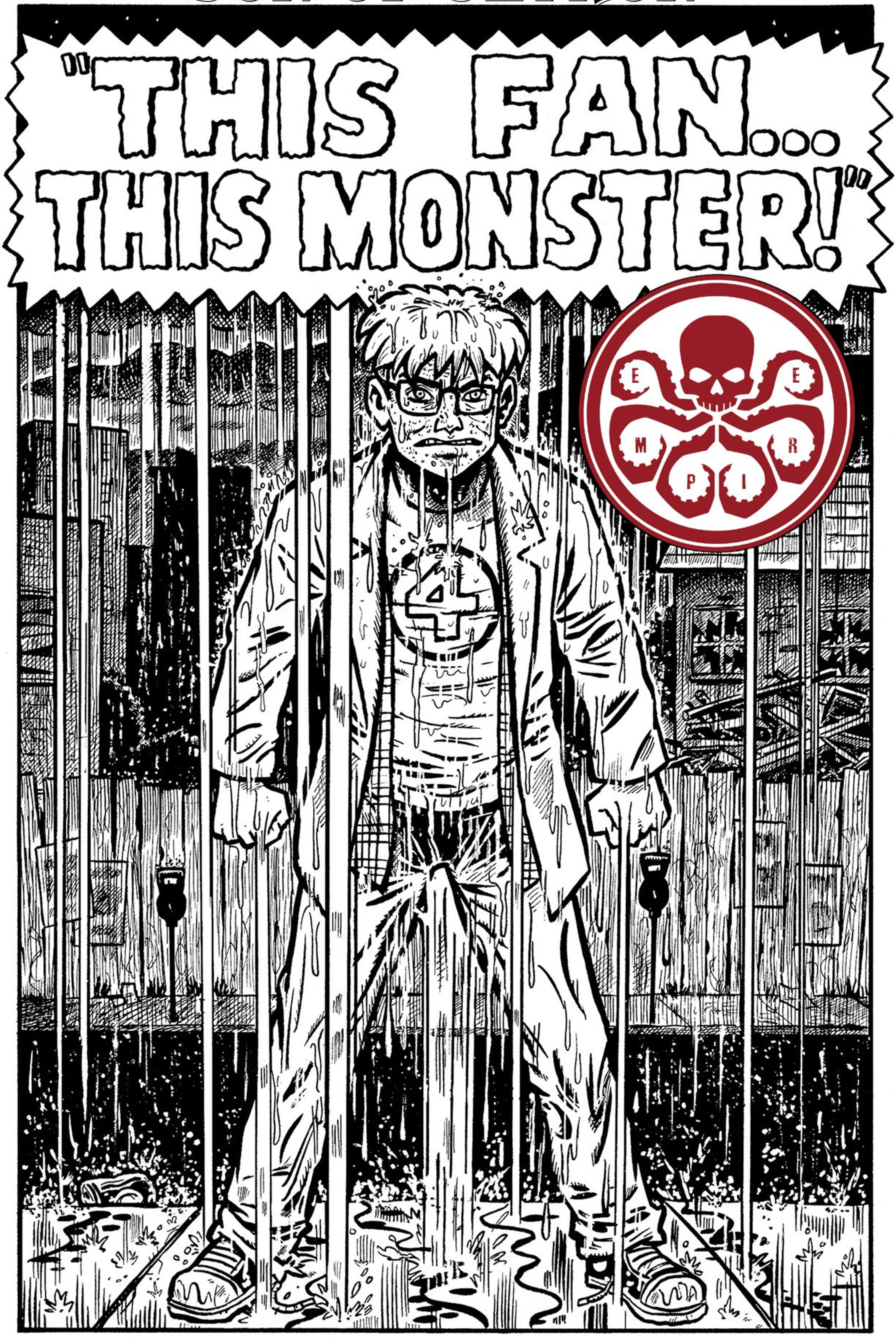
"An origin story that hits hard and fast! Bennett and Cafaro's *WITCHBLADE* is a gritty and exciting reimagining that leaves you desperately wanting issue two!"
– Chip Zdarsky *(SEX CRIMINALS, Batman)*

"Fast-paced and relentlessly entertaining. A great introduction to the character of Sara Pezzini, and for longtime fans, an equally great and very welcome re-introduction."
– John Layman *(CHEW, Xena: Warrior Princess, Thundercats)*

"Marguerite Bennett has penned a page-turner that reimagines Sara Pezzini's origins, setting the detective off on a tantalizing murder mystery that weaves in threads of the supernatural as the narrative unfolds. A must-read."
– Blake Northcott *(Catwoman, Fathom, Vampirella, Heavy Metal Magazine)*
Editor-in-Chief, Massive Publishing

COVER A ART BY **MARC SILVESTRI** AND **ARIF PRIANTO**
TOPCOW.COM | IMAGECOMICS.COM | RATED T + / TEEN PLUS

SON OF ULTRON


"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"